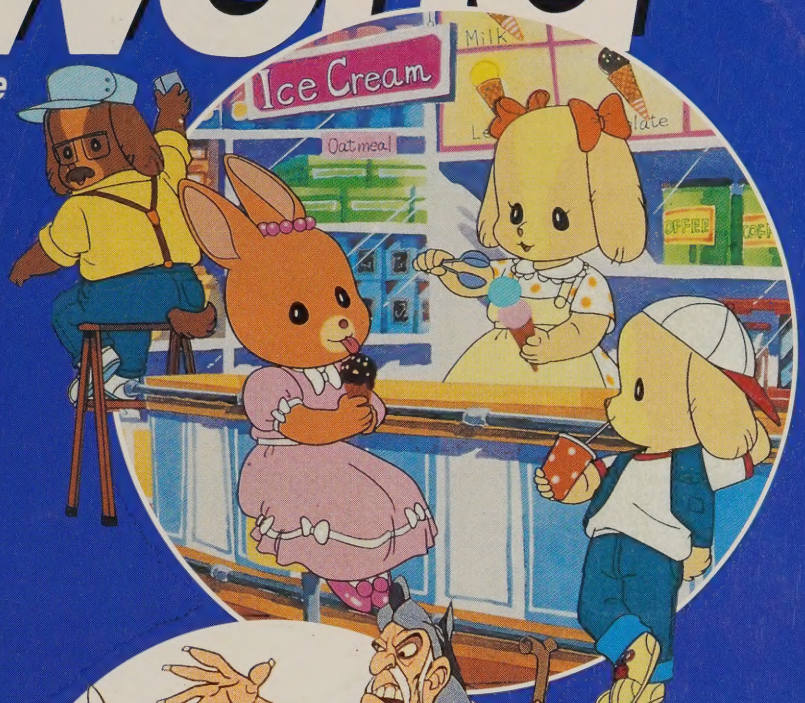
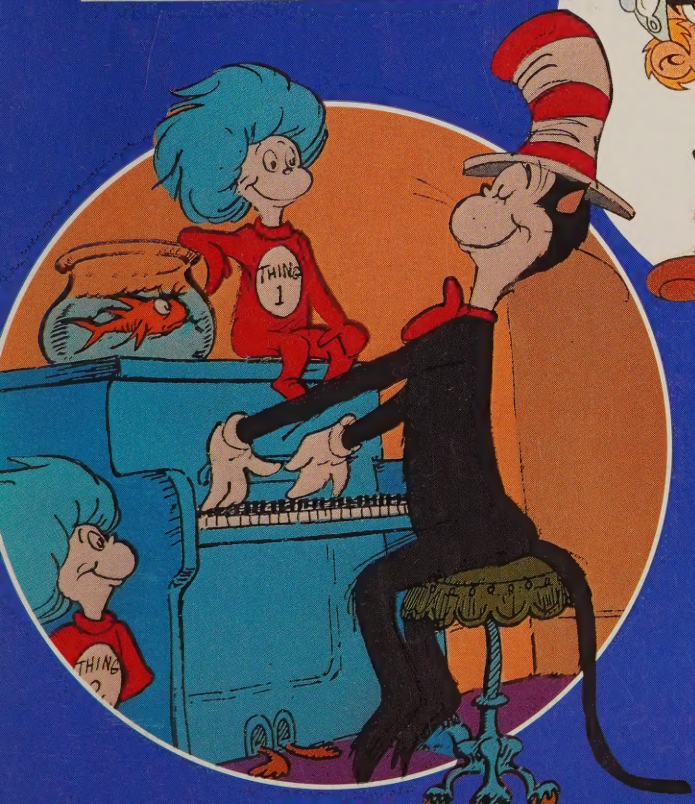
TV World

international business magazine
for television and video

March/April 1988 **$5.00**





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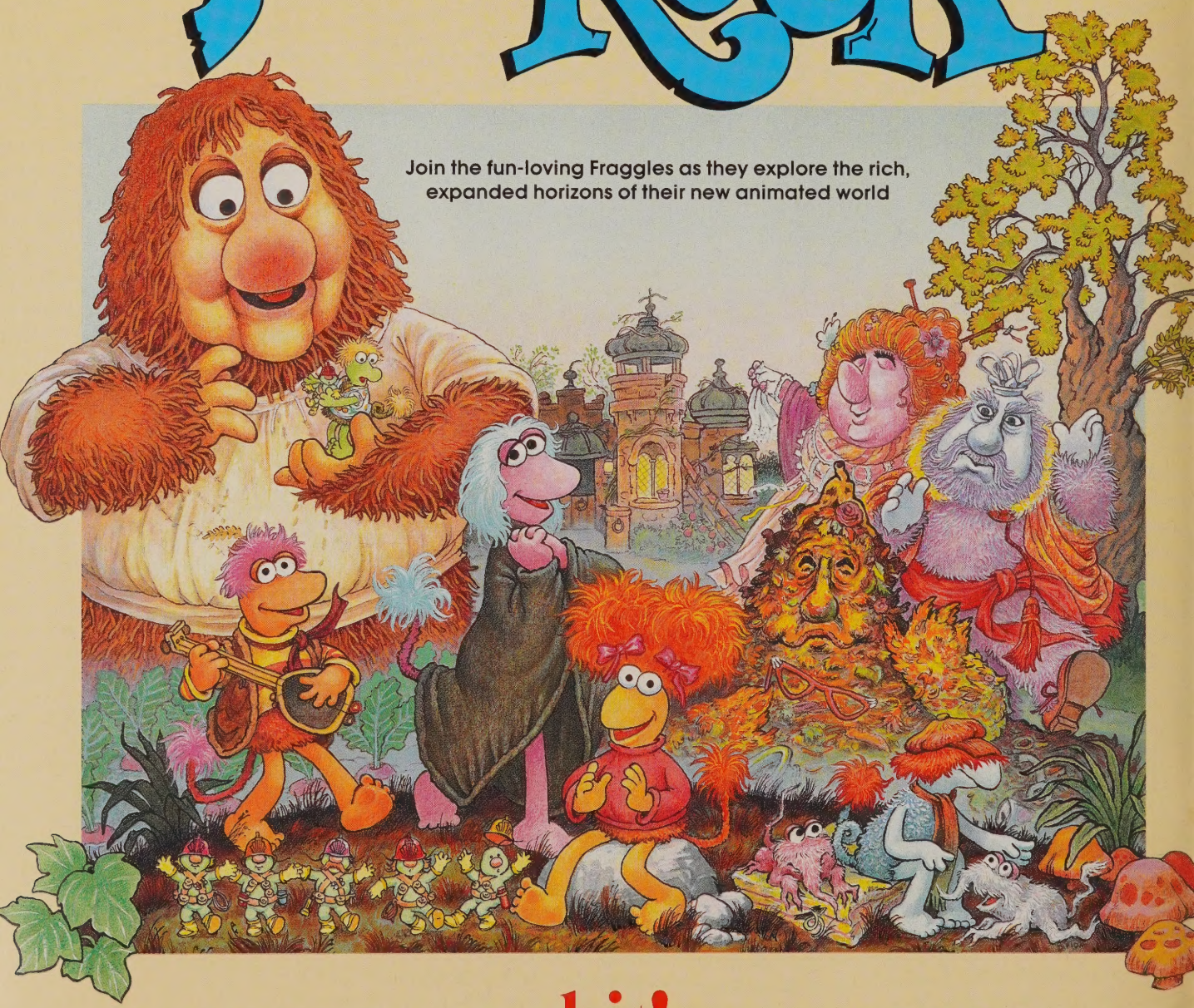

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If you are seriously interested in the world's TV and Video business, then you should be subscribing to the leading international magazine that is read by over 60,000 executives in 143 countries. Ensure you receive TV World's biggest ever issue next month. It includes the comprehensive and unique World Prices Chart. Subscribe now by returning the form today.

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Tex-mex turnout

HOUSTON: The 25th Convention of NATPE kicked off in a hot and humid Houston with two power packed seminars. The international panel on 'Global Finance' included Channel 4's Michael Grade, Pierre Lescure from Canal Plus and Berlusconi's head of co-productions, Ricardo Tozzi.

Issues raised revolved around the financing of international co-productions and the possibilities of the US marketplace opening up.

Dashes of comment were thrown in from leading lights in the audience who were skillfully hand-picked by moderator Michael J Soloman from Lorimar.

Meanwhile, (back at the Canadian ranch), the well publicised seminar 'Doing business with the Canadians' was running concurrently. A panel of Canadian producers explained how well they were doing thus far in the supply of product to the US networks and TV stations, but, as Sheldon S Wiseman from Evergreen TV Productions explained, "lack of familiarity and apprehension prevents more deals from happening." Sam Wendel and Lorraine B Good from Telefilm were producers with Wendel also acting as eloquent moderator, coining the phrase "quality time, not quantity time" to describe the current state of Canadian programming on the US networks.

Eloquent

The same situation was discussed the following day during 'Will it Play in Peoria?'. This provided a candid, often painful assessment of overseas programming by a panel comprised of US TV station and distribution executives. After viewing clips from product that included *Black Forest Clinic* and *Fathers and Sons*, they tended to conclude that although some had "American potential", they generally "would not succeed if placed in syndication or network TV in the competitive US marketplace." This was enough to goad a distributor into leaping out of his seat and into a microphoned position to describe station managers (SM's) as "Fat cats", with not enough dare to take foreign programming. Loud cries of denial from the SM's created a great sense of theatre, all admirably moderated by Paramount's Bruce Gordon.

Daily, at high noon, the exhibition floor (80,000 square metres and 220 stands) opened to 7,500 attendees, many of whom seemed to be window shopping.

The 'It's a pseudo- Go' trend that emerged from the convention sprung from the prominence of distributors announcing 'a go' for syndicated series without the 70 per cent clearance. (This is often required from advertisers before they will purchase barter time). However, some felt that the quality of the programming involved meant that clearances would be in hand before the shows are due to air.

The US stars were out in force this year — Joan Rivers and Mr T were amongst those competing with the usual assortment of multi-sexed wrestlers for the station managers' attention, whilst outside armed and extremely Texan policemen on horses kept watch over the stretch limo's and attendees.

THE Editor's LETTER

European Television — and Silvio Berlusconi in particular — has learnt a hard and costly lesson over the last year. It is based on the same truth that the film industry has also had to come to terms with in recent times. It is this: the public are no longer impressed by starts. In the cinema big names do not a box-office hit make; the day of matinee idols and screen legends is done. If the public is forking out to go to the movies, it's the strength of the story — and perhaps the director — that will pull them through the doors.

When Berlusconi and Hersant were awarded the licence to operate France's La Cinq, they decided to buy ready-to-wear stars and starmakers off the shelf of TF1. Top producer Marie-France Briere went and her protege Stephane Collaro went with her; so did the two Patricks — Sebastien and Sabatier. They started a game of musical chairs which is still being played out.

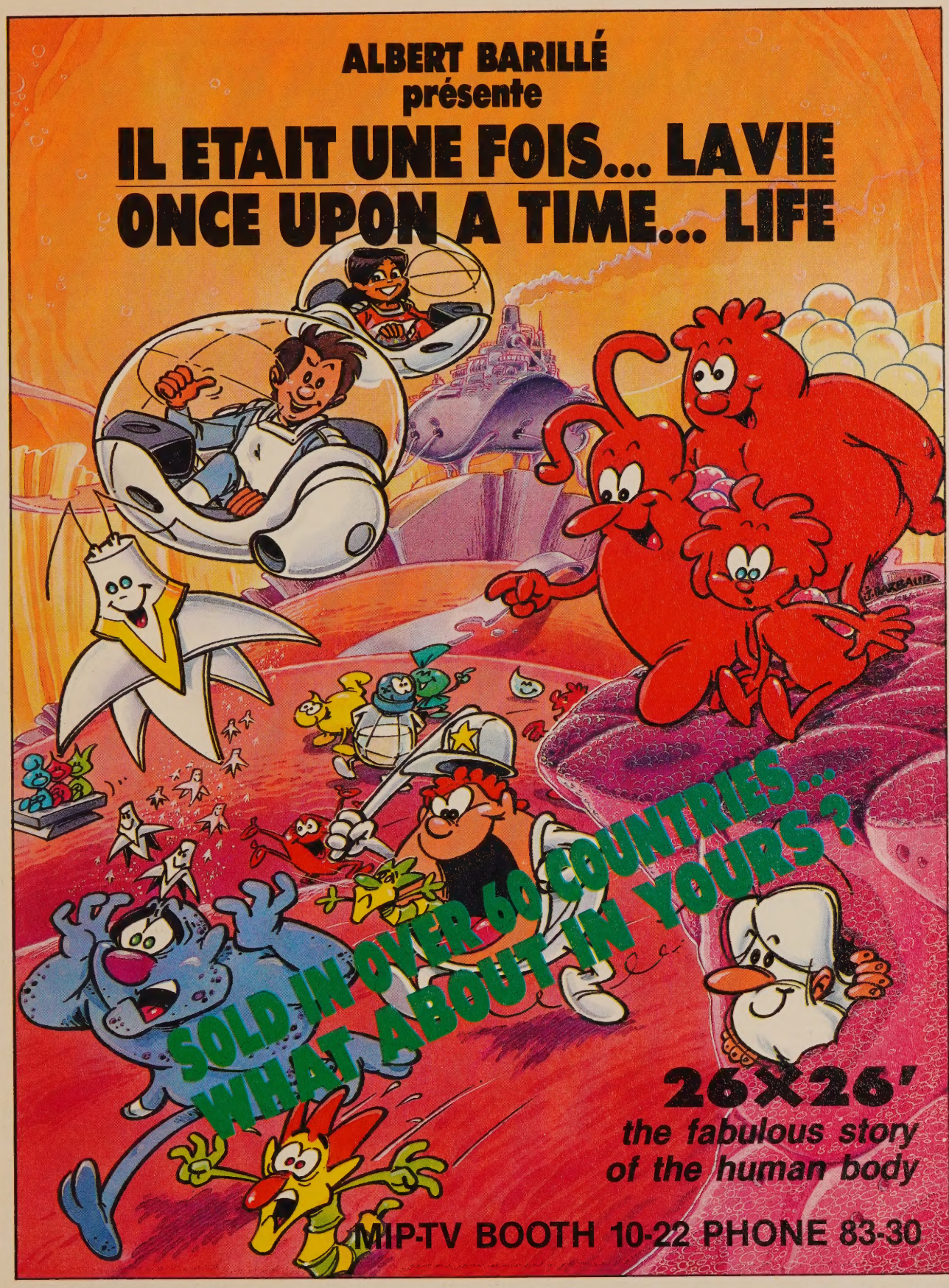
At around the same time, Berlusconi seemed to decide that if it worked with La Cinq, then why shouldn't it work with Canale 5? He proved that any star is for sale — if the price is right. RAI's two top stars Pippo Baudo and Raffaella Carra both switched sides, accompanied by Enrica Buonaccorti and Milly Carlucci.

The idea was simple, even logical; the stars would do virtually the same show they had done on their former channel, and bring in the same or higher viewing figures. But the viewing public proved an unpredictable animal, and in both cases remained with the channel rather than follow the stars. The possible reasons are manifold; viewers may not have been aware what had happened; they may not have known how to find, or could not receive the new channel on their set (La Cinq only reaches 50 per cent of France); or they may have thought it was an underhand action, and decided to "punish" the perpetrators by not watching them.

Another, more positive, development also took place. Into the vacuums stepped people who proved brave, resourceful and talented. Dominique Cantien replaced Briere at TF1, Adriano Celentano took over from Baudo on RAI-1; and the "stars" came creeping back with their tails between their legs.

As competition is likely to get fiercer between television channels throughout the world, perhaps we would all be advised to bear these events in mind.

Alison Horwood



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In brief

CARACAS: Venezuela's fifth TV channel goes on air officially this month. Since February, Televen Channel 10 started its test period with colour bars and music in February.

The new channel is the first concession for a television station granted during Venezuela's democratic period. It is also the strongest channel as it is broadcasting with 40 kilowatts. The emergence of this new channel is proving a challenge for professionals working in Venezuelan TV, as it is providing more competition and more jobs for hundreds of people.

HANOI: An agreement has been signed between the Soviet State Committee for Television and Vietnam Television, under which the Soviet Union will help the Vietnamese TV service to develop.

One of the major points in the deal was the Soviet initiative to help build a colour TV broadcasting centre. The Soviets have also supplied programmes and technical facilities in which to train staff.

BEIJING: There are at least 300 cable television stations in operation in China. Most have been set up by Chinese businesses, places of higher learning or research institutes. Some regional stations are being constructed in districts of Peking, Shanghai and Wuhan to transmit local and national TV programmes.

HAMBURG: West Germany's Norddeutscher Rundfunk (NDR) has announced it is forming a sugbsidiary, NDR International GmbH to deal with acquisition, sales and co-production. As a private enterprise company, it will be able to deal more quickly and less bureaucratically than its public service parent. Profits will be able to be invested in new production rather than disappearing into the common pot. The new firm will be capitalised with DM 40 million budget. MD will be Heinz-Guenter Sass. It will go into operation in June.

Thailand wins out on TV front

VIENTIANE: Amidst the frontier fighting between Laos and Thai troops, the two countries' TV stations have also been fighting hard for viewers, Lao TV fans have two choices – either to watch the mundane local channel (LNT) or to tune into the more popular Thai broadcasts on Channel 7 and Khon Kaen's Channel 4.

Of the 2.5 hour daily broadcast on Laos TV, beginning at 19.30 hours, half of the programme is devoted to promoting government policy and projects. The rest is local and international news along with educational, cultural and arts programmes. LNT's international news footage relies solely on the daily two-hour satellite feed from Moscow from which it usually takes 10 minutes-worth of material. All Soviet programmes are dubbed.

LNT, which began broadcasting in December 1983, will soon open a second TV station, in Suwannakhet province opposite Thailand's Mukdahan province, by the end of 1988. The Soviet Union and Vietnam are providing technical assistance. According to Bounmek Phengsavan, Director General of Lao TV, the station is also planning to launch its first afternoon broadcast on weekend holidays in the near future; this will mainly focus on educational programmes. Subsequently, the daily broadcast will also be increased to three hours or more. To provide entertainment, LNT also runs feature films, mainly from the Soviet Union, which are shown in two or three installments.

The LNT chief admitted that Thai TV broadcasts are more popular among the Laotian viewers due to their variety. He said he also watches Thai TV to keep up with the Laotian audience. Bounmek maintains that Thai TV has never threatened Lao TV, because the station is aimed at serving Laotians' interest and promoting government works. That's why he said the Lao government has no plans to jam Thai TV broadcasts, even during the thick of Thai-Lao clashes.

"We figure Laotian viewers can judge for themselves what they have seen on Thai TV," said Bounmek. "It is entertaining to watch Thai TV, but it could also be detrimental to our people because it reflects a different reality," many times, Bounmek said, Thai TV drama series show unhealthy scenes which are degrading for a Laotian audience.

One of the biggest advantages derived from watching Thai TV was the international news programme, which has kept Lao government officials abreast of international developments.

Michael Caine as Det Inspector Abberline and Lewis Collins as George Godley pictured at Bishopsgate Police Station during filming for Jack The Ripper.

This new Thames Television four-part drama serial filmed at Pinewood Studios will be broadcast in Britain on ITV and in the US on the CBS network this autumn.

Franchise freedom

LONDON: The announcement from the government that the ITV franchises are to be put up for auction to the highest bidders brought mixed but very strong reactions from the UK television industry.

Most of the existing franchise-holders are condemning the idea, saying it would spell disaster for the independent network, and for UK broadcasting as a whole. The ITV Association has sworn to fight the proposal. However, a small groundswell of opinion is suggesting that it is not such a bad idea. Francis Baron, whose company W H Smith TV is a 21 per cent owner of Yorkshire TV, thinks that it is a positive move. "TV is a business which must provide a quality product for the consumer. A move towards a freer market means more choice, and more viewer control. I am not one of the old school who think that the system we have is sacrosanct. If the awarding of the franchises is changed, they will also have to remove the constricting legislation that comes with the current arrangement."

End of JBC?

BARBADOS: The Jamaican government has formed a special unit to hasten the establishment of a new Public Broadcasting Service (PBS), which will run state-owned radio and television. The unit is being headed by Babsy Grange.

The Edward Seaga government is planning to divest the Jamaica Broadcasting Corporation (JBC) and grant licences for new radio and television stations here. The PBS will have responsibility for public affairs broadcasting.

Ulric Simmonds, a retired political journalist and presently consulting editor of the JBC, has been appointed General Manager of JBC.

Studio opens

KHARTOUM: Sudanese Television will be broadcasting nationally by the end of 1988, according to Culture and Information Minister Tum Muhammad al-Tum. He was opening one of the two new TV production studios in the country. A second channel is also planned to compliment the existing 25-year-old one, which is believed to be the third oldest television in Africa.

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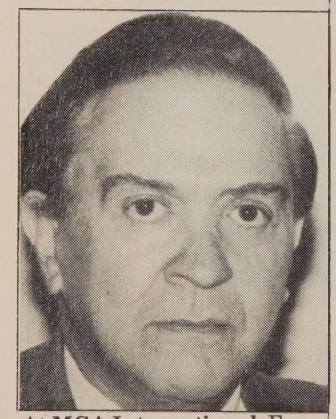
PEOPLE

Linda Ekizian has been promoted to Director, International Sales at **Devillier Donegan Enterprises**. She was previously Director, Sales Administration. Ekizian will direct sales of *The American Collection* in all territories outside North America and will direct the sales agents in seven territories including France, Germany, Greece and Italy and will oversee efforts at all of the major markets.

David Cunliffe has been appointed Managing Director of **ITC Productions Ltd.**, the UK production division of the ITC Entertainment Group.

Cunliffe, who will join ITC on May 1, comes from Yorkshire Television where he has been Controller of Drama.



At **MCA International**, Francisco Padilla, VP for Latin America has decided on early retirement after 21 years with the company. Wanderley Fucciolo, currently VP in MCA's Sao Paulo office will assume responsibility for those markets previously assigned to Padilla. Wanderley has been with MCA in Brazil for the past 16 years — he will continue to reside in Sao Paulo.

More US product bought as result of public opinion

KUWAIT CITY: Kuwait television has bought a host of new shows, mostly American, as a response to criticism in two recent polls.

The two polls in *Arabian Times* and *Kuwait Times* showed that viewers wanted more of the latest movies and series as well as an increase in comedy and music. What the viewers wanted less of was documentaries and sport.

The weekly highlights will be the best-sellers *Anastasia* and *A Year in the Life* to be shown on Sunday and Monday nights.

An array of new movies are planned for screening on Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday nights. These include *Back To The Future, Five Easy Pieces, Superman 3, Force 10 From Navarone,* and *The Odessa File.*

(Top): 'Moonlighting' and (below): 'The Cosby Show'

Action series *Moonlighting, HotShots, Heart of the City* and *Matlock* have all been lined up and leading American comedy star Bill Cosby, returns with his self-named show, *The Bill Cosby Show.*

Abdullah Rasheed, director of KTV2 said that this is just the start of a whole new series of the best American, British, and Australian shows. KTV2 is also buying music programmes for showing at a later date and plans are afoot in the pipeline to extend the *News in Brief* both in length and content.

However, KTV2 is planning more than 6 hours of sport on Thursdays and Fridays and a series of documentaries including *Silk Road, QED, Horizon,* and *First Eden* despite their unpopularity with the viewers according to the recent polls.

Puppet love

MOSCOW/PITTSBURGH: In an unsual exchange of love and good will, US and Russian puppets are visiting each other's television programmes. Stepashka the Rabbit, a regular on the Soviet Union's *Good Night, Little Ones,* journeyed to Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania in the US last month. Pittsburgh is the neighbourhood where *Mr. Rogers' Neighbourhood* is produced. Previously, Daniel Striped tiger had completed his mission to Moscow from the US Neighborhood.

Excerpts from both visits aired on PBS in the US during a special week in March devoted to the delights of the night, as part of the 20th anniversary celebration for *Mister Rogers' Neighborhood.*

"We hope the visits show that no matter where we live there are adults who care about children," commented Fred Rogers.

Host for *Good Night, Little Ones* is Tatiana Vedeneeva, who accompanied Stepashka to the US. After all — that's a long trip for a rabbit to make alone.

Bouygues behind new private TV in Morocco

RABAT: The first private TV channel in Africa and the Arab world is to be set up in Casablanca, Morocco, to begin transmitting in March 1989.

The channel, run by a company called Societé d'Etude et realisation audio visuelle (Soread), is to be financed by advertising and a possible 200,000 subscribers of French language programmes is to be transmitted in the evenings. Arabic language programmes are planned for the day and will be available to all television owners.

Overseas interests

The company comprises nine Moroccan entities including banks and financial institutions, amongst them, Banque Marocaine du Commerce Exterieure and Omnium Nord Africain (ONA). This makes up 51 per cent of the new company. The rest is held by overseas interests, from mainly French investors. Stakes are held by TF-1 and Sofirad. Videotron, a Montreal based firm also has an interest.

The new channel, to be broadcast via Intelsat, will need new studios and new equipment which will require an investment of US$36.4 million. It will use a ground relay network that was intended for Morocco's second public channel which is still to be set up.

Training

Staff are being trained in all areas of work on the channel in France at the National Institure of Audiovisuals (INA) and will be working on TF-1 programmes during their training. This is part of an agreement signed in Marrakech towards the end of February between Francis Bouygues, director of TF-1 and Fouad Filali, president of ONA.

Filali said that the project's success relied on making high quality programmes that responded to the needs and tastes of Moroccan viewers.

animated collection

THE MULTI MEDIA GROUP OF CANADA

The Foundations of Wealth

Produced by Video Arts Television
Animated film 10 X 10 min.
This series is designed to explain the basic principles of economics — from subsistence to surplus — to children from 10-14.
Rights: TV
French-speaking countries

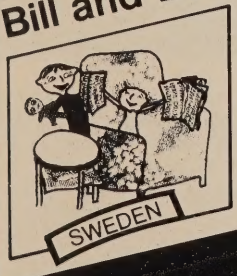
Tony de Peltrie

Produced by P. Lachapelle, Emotion Studios
Computer animation
7 min. 50 sec.
This award-winning film is a masterpiece of computer animation, featuring the world's first synthetic actor.
Rights: Home video — TV
Worldwide

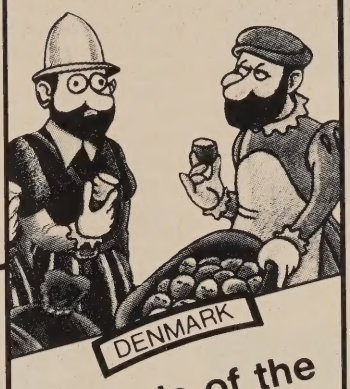
The Fantins

Produced by Gulseren Corkaci
Animated film 26 X 7 min.
A series for pre-school children to teach concepts like long and short, fast and slow, in a way that encourages friendship and co-operation.
Rights: Home video — TV
French-speaking countries

Bill and Bunny



Produced by Cinemation AB
Animated film 24 min. 45 sec.
A tender, funny film in which 9-year-old Bill learns to deal with his sister, Bunny's handicap.
Rights: Home video — TV
French-speaking countries



The Tale of the Wonderful Potato

Produced by Filmforsyningen
Animated film 24 min.
A film tribute to one of the unsung heroes of everyday life — the lowly potato.
Rights: Home video — TV
French, Italian, Spanish, Portuguese speaking countries

Rhythm

Produced by Ein Gedi Films
Animated film 24 min.
A film all about rhythm. A rhythm machine is used to explain beat, accent, tempo, metre, etc. in a humorous way.
Rights: Home video — TV
German and French speaking countries, Scandinavia, Africa

Adventures in Videoland

Produced by Prisma
Animated video 8 X 45 min. approx.
A unique collection of 8 "video-books", this series brings to life a delightful selection of fables, introducing children to books in an entertaining way.
Rights: Home video
Worldwide

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PEOPLE

Robert Chow has been made VP for Japan and the Far East for **Orion Pictures International**. He joined Orion in '86 as Director of Sales Far East.

Philip Nugus

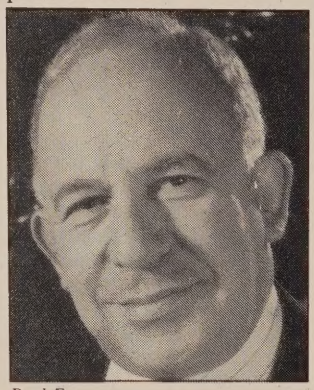
Philip Nugus has been appointed Chief Executive of **Premiere**, the UK's pay tv channel. Nugus was previously Director of Marketing for Thorn EMI Screen Entertainment. Over the last few months Nugus and Bryan Cowgill, who advises Premiere on programming matters, have renegotiated new long-term product licences with the major studios in Hollywood. Jonathan Martin has also jointed Premiere as Marketing Director. He was previously Head of Marketing Services for Nugus at Thorn EMI Screen Entertainment.

Patricia Durkin Beard and John Hornaday have been promoted to producers for the **USA Network**. Beard serves as producer of *In a Minute* — the in-house production for and about children. Hornaday is writer and producer of the weekly children's show, *USA Kid's Club*.

An exclusive long term pact has been signed between **Disney** and Don Brinkley under which Brinkley will create and develop television properties for network, syndication and cable programming. Brinkley was co-creator and executive producer on *Trapper John, MD*, producer on *Medical Centre* and most recently he created, wrote and produced the pilot *Divided we Stand*.

Bernadette Vacher

Bernadette Vacher is promoted to Sales Executive in the London office of **MCA TV International**. Bernadette will be responsible for all administrative and sales support services in the London office, plus she will also assume responsiblities in some European markets.



Paul Fox

Paul Fox is the new Managing Director of **BBC Television** and the Chairman of **BBC Enterprises,** The BBC's commercial arm. He succeeds current MD Bill Cotton in April. Currently MD of Yorkshire TV, Fox has also previously been controller of BBC1 before moving over the ITV in the '70's. He described his new appointment as "coming home".

Ditta Cuzy has been made Vice President of Programme Sales for **Producers Group International** and Dennis H. O'Neill takes over the new position of Vice President, Marketing.

At **ITC**, Deborah Service has been made Director of Television Development for **ITC Productions**. Service joined the company last year as Manager of TV development and was previously Director of Development at Ron Samuels Production.

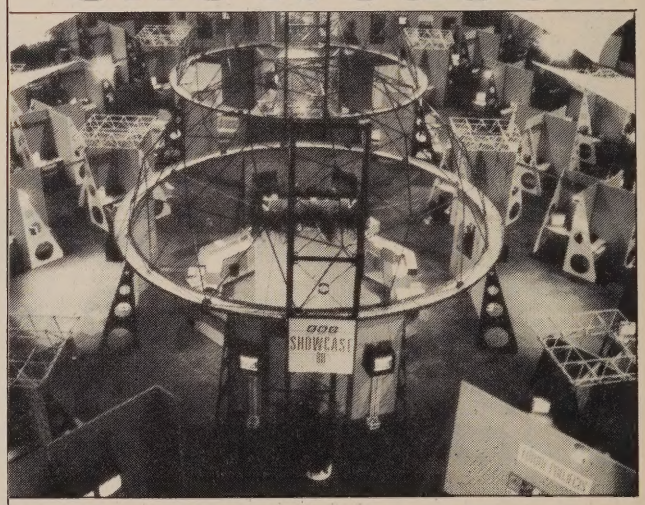
New deals . new deals.

Turner Broadcasting System, Inc. has concluded an agreement with the Soviet Union's **Videofilm Association and Sovexport-films,** the chief Soviet organisation supervising export and import of films, for the sale of videocassette rights to various items controlled by TBS. Ten MGM films and the complete series *Portrait of America* are included in the transaction.

Radio Vision International (RVI) has launched it's own music home video label, Radio Vision Video (RVV), and has named Karl T. Wall president and chief executive officer. RVV has its eye on becoming the dominant player in the music-focused portion of the home video arena which currently represents an estimated 3% of the approximately $7 billion plus industry.

Priced for sell-through at $14.95 for short-form music clip compilations and $19.95 for long-form concerts, RVV will concentrate exclusively on supplying music video product with its primary goal to be a leading supplier of music-focused video product to domestic mass merchants.

Shanghai showcase



BRIGHTON: BBC Enterprises annual sales festival 'Showcase' held in Brighton reaped an unprecedented deal with China's largest regional TV station – Guangdon Television. It has signed up for 180 hours of BBC programmes.

Nui Zu Ying, Vice Director General of Guangdong TV – which has an audience of 60 million – made the selection of programmes during the concentrated viewing week. Programmes chosen include *Tender is the Night, Shoestring* and *The Eye of the Dragon*.

800 new titles were offered to the 231 overseas buyers who attended the showcase – 50 percent of which has yet to be transmitted on UK television.

The delegates, representing 85 stations from 29 countries each have their own booth and are treated to an in-house BBC TV station – four channels each showing different BBC programming, all with their own trailers produced especially for the showcase. The Showcase week grossed over £5 million (US $9million) for BBC Enterprises.

Brazil video mart off to strong start

SAO PAULO: Two hundred thousand video-cassettes sold in five days, all legal rights and taxes paid. This was the impressive result of the Brazilian Video Trade Fair, the first event of its kind in the country.

The Fair showed that after six months of fighting piracy the market profile has already started to change.

"A complete success," said Gilberto da Silva, a partner of the company that organised the event and one of the largest Brazilian distributors, "Four large distributors sold 50,000 tapes each." Last year it took a month to sell 150,000 legal tapes.

The event brought in US$20 million in the first week of March, an illustration of the increased professionalism in the Brazilian home video market. The sale of copies to rental stores and directly to the public represented half of the amount, the rest came from hardware and software business. These figures were disclosed by the organising company, JGC Emprendimentos, who invested US$1.5 million in the event. The show area in Sao Paulo accommodated 110 exhibitors, principally distributors, within 5,000 square metres.

Promoting the event showed the strength of the legal market. "Two years ago pirate tapes made up 90 per cent of the market. Today they have dropped to 70 per cent." said Silva.

However, Cyro del Nero, also one of the organisers and a Brazilian TV veteran estimates differently. He believes piracy holds only 40 per cent of the market, "This will be a good year. Besides the success of the show, the installation of Warner Home Video in the country will inhibit even more illegal activity. Titles whose owners are present give no opportunity for piracy," said Del Nero, awaiting the arrival of other majors to Brazil.

High inflation of 15 per cent badly affected the home video market in the second half of last year. Distributors' costs rocketed and at the same time the acquisition power of video tape rental stores and direct consumers collapsed. The average price of US$70 per tape became too high and last year's sales in the legal market came to only US$60 million dollars. Because of this the success of the fair was a cause for celebration. "To some companies in the market, it was almost a salvation," said Silva, "At the moment there is no doubt that the Brazilian market exists and is alive and well."

Del Nero estimates that there are four million video-cassette recorders in the country, an optimistic figure but one that cannot be denied as people in Brazil tend to use smuggled equipment, thereby making actual figures impossible to confirm. A good adventure title in Brazil will sell an average of 5,000 copies for which a Brazilian distributor can pay from US$5-10,000 but the upper limit is seldom paid.

Next year the organisers hope to have a wider international contribution although date and venue have not yet been set.

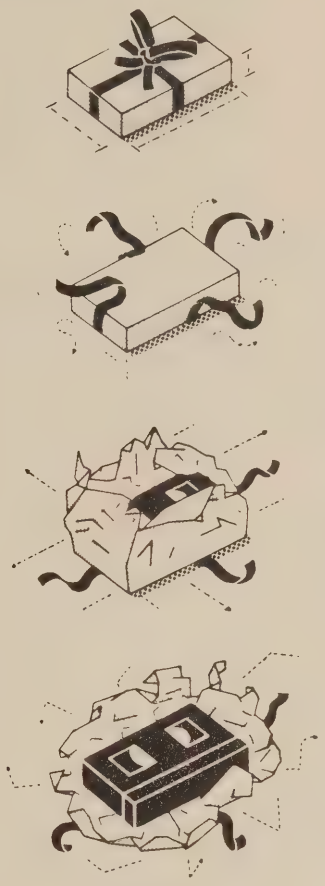
Trouble for Telecine

GENEVA: The future for troubled pay-TV service Telecine looks doomed, as the Swiss government has put on a block on its life-saving tie-up with Canal Plus.

Although the French pay service was not taking a shareholding in Telecine, the Swiss authority is viewing the proposed retransmission as giving Canal Plus a Swiss broadcasting concession. It is also concerned that Telecine would lose its autonomy had would have to accept rule from Paris.

Now Telecine shareholders are meeting to discuss what to do with the channel; many are thought to be unwilling to invest further money in the service, especially as one of the main attractions — the future conversion of it into Switzerland's official fourth channel — now looks unlikely.

GOOD THINGS COME IN LITTLE PACKAGES



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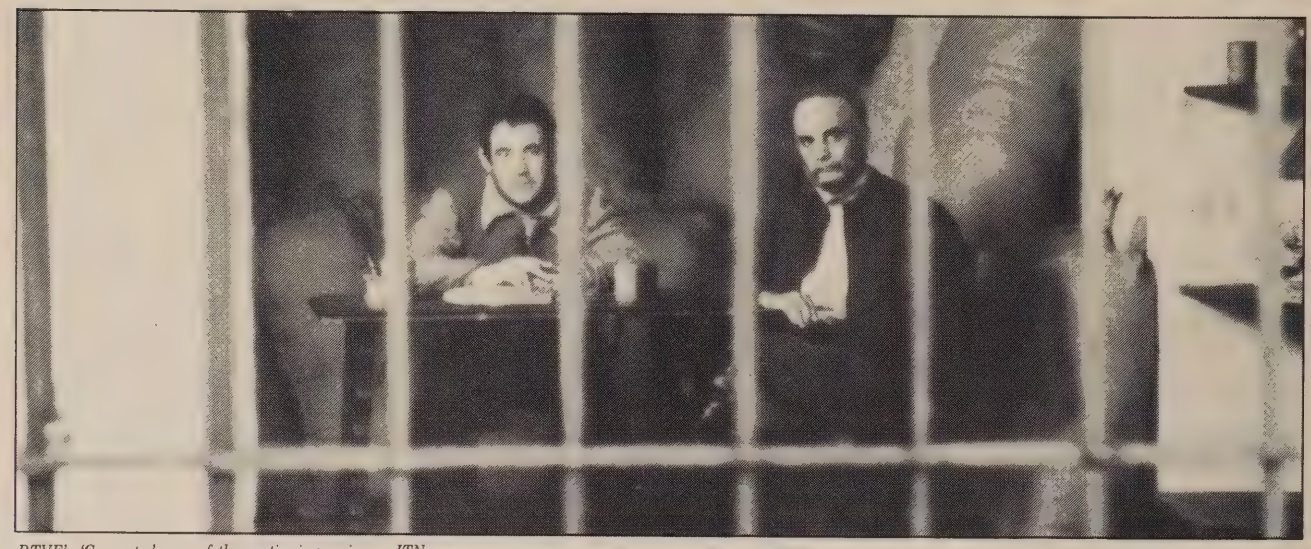
Breaking down the barrier



RTVE's 'Cervantes': one of the continuing series on ITN

OVERLY insulated, according to international critics, the US television industry stubbornly continues to maintain it is not ready for broad-based international programming. However, the International Television Network (ITN) has gone ahead anyway and is delivering foreign programming to about 60 broadcast, direct broadcast satellite (DBS) and cable outlets.

The network, now in seven of the top 10 markets, reaches nearly 22 million households – mostly broadcast but including over six million cable homes. By this time next year, ITN's new management team plans to transmit programming internationally, supported by global advertising. The first production for worldwide distribution will be made on location in July. A half hour news strip (five a week) is expected to be on-line by January 1989.

How has ITN broken the US station barrier after all other assaults have failed? By organising a network of stations, in the second place, and by re-defining the problem in the first place.

The problem has traditionally been "How do we convince station managers their viewers will watch foreign programmes?" There has been no solution. There is just too much risk for them to take a chance and the perception is that in fact US audiences will *not* watch foreign programming – except smaller, specific demographics such as narrowcasting reaches on Public Television and some cable systems.

In 1983 Bernard Chevry's American Market for International Programming (AMIP) tried to solve the problem by bringing international producers and distributors together with US station executives to sort it all out. But despite Miami and, Florida's balmy climate, he had to fold up his tents after one more year and take them back to Cannes.

International Television Network has tackled the job that couldn't be done and is doing it by feeding 28 hours a week of foreign programming to 60 domestic affiliates. Has someone finally broken the station barrier? An exclusive interview with ITN's new top chief by Arnold J. Friedman

Similarly, several years of NATPE International meetings and panels have also failed. The discussion at this year's conference in Texas was a disasterous shutout of foreign product.

So instead of continuing to beat their heads against the stone wall US stations have built around themselves, ITN perceived the problem to be one of convincing station managers to *schedule* foreign programmes. That's different from convincing them their viewers will watch the schedule. Now the issue becomes one of determining just what it takes to get foreign programming out where viewers can see it and answer the question themselves. ITN had confidence in the US audiences. It was also confident that the international language was still *money*. Potential affiliates were offered a security blanket of minimal risk. In return for coming on-line they could have combinations of; cash compensation; generous barter arrangements; cherry-picking privileges (the right to pick only the programmes they want); flexibility of scheduling; heavy sales and promotional backup: sometimes ITN puts representatives into individual markets to consult and help sell local advertising, according to newly appointed president and CEO Carl J. Sabatino.

Sabatino is part of the management troika that acquired ITN this January, on behalf of World Television, Inc. World – as the name implies – is a global investment company seeking television enterprises. ITN is a nationwide, satellite-fed network presenting multilingual programmes that are subtitled (not dubbed) when not in English. Each daily feed is four hours of programming, and includes feature films; drama and comedy series; documentaries; sports programmes and news/information shows. Some of the countries where they originate are Australia, Brazil, Canada, Czechoslovakia, Germany, Israel, Italy, Japan, Korea, Mexico, The Netherlands, New Zealand, Poland, Portugual, Spain, UK, USSR . . . and the US.

Among continuing series on ITN are *Derrick* (Germany); *Cervantes* (Spain) and *Black Clouds* (Poland).

continued on p14 ▶

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Breaking the barrier

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Two news and information programmes carried by the network are the Christian Science Monitor and Wall Street Journal Reports. Ironically, perhaps, WSJ is being discontinued by Sabatino, who used to be director of sales and marketing for the Report when he worked for Dow Jones & Company, which produces and distributes the financial news series.

"I asked them to provide some sort of international base as a separate insert, to give my viewers a broader stroke," Sabatino told *TV World* during an interview at his New York headquarters. "I said their time on the air would

"We're missing the kind of news that affects our lives"

be limited without more of an international profile but they apparently felt the ITN audience wasn't worth their time. They have a right to that opinion," said Sabatino, "And I have the right to drop them. And I did."

The Wall Street Journal Report, which has run on ITN for over a year, is syndicated throughout the US so it is understandable to Sabatino that they would not make the change just for him when the rest of their stations don't require one.

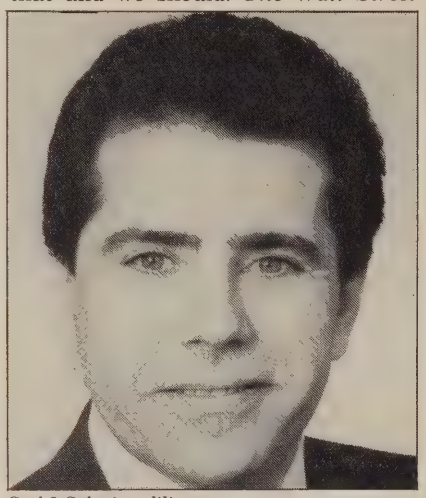
To replace WSJ, Satabino says he has asked Nippon Business and Christian Science Monitor to supply him with what he wants. Nippon presently provides two off-schedule programmes (15 and 40 minutes) but is expected to deliver two half-hour programmes that will fit neatly into ITN's new schedule.

Sabatino said he expects to pull one of the major broadcast editors out of Dow Jones to work with him on various financial segments of his various news programmes, including the big one projected for January 1989.

This is characterised by him as an international *Today Show*, which is to be transmitted daily from ITN's Washington, DC facilities and fed to a London downlink for a live noon broadcast. It will be ITN's first news strip and will feature a rotating team of international correspondents reporting on US news from a world perspective.

"The best of the best are sent to Washington by their countries' publications," he said, noting that this programme would be the first opportunity most have to find out, from television, what the world is thinking about the US.

The first seven minutes of the half hour, he said, might be hard news, followed by reaction to it from each of the correspondents from the point of view of their countries. He gave as an example of a feature story the effect of the common market on US stabilization of wheat prices. "How does that affect the German wheat farmers? We don't have any working knowledge of that and we should. *The Wall Street*



Carl J. Sabatino: diligent

Journal (the print version) will cover it. But you won't see it in *USA Today* (nationwide electronic newspaper); *The New York Post* won't go near it. *The Los Angeles Times* might have a third of a column situation. But you won't see it in the *Chicago Tribune*. We're missing it. We're missing the kind of news that affects our lives."

"Even the financially oriented television programmes now on line don't discuss US affairs from a foreign point of view," Sabatino said. Citing the *PBS Nightly Business Report* as an excellent programme, he added, "But it's always geared toward the US market."

Sabatino says his new news show will maintain an unbiased albeit global point of view. Excepting some Cable News Network and CBS Network programmes, he said he questions the impartiality of US news that goes to domestic and international markets.

"One of the reasons I carry the *Christian Science Monitor* is that it is as close to impartial as you can get. Not all the time," he hastened to qualify his statement, "But at least they give it a good effort."

ITN's first international programming is a four-city concert tour of the USSR featuring Tina Yothers, a teenage actress known best for her continuing role as the younger sister on *Family Ties*. In return for seed money, ITN has world broadcast rights to the concerts, which are conceived as a glasnost goodwill tour to cement relationships between the two countries and to help bridge the generation gap in Russia.

The *Youth Ambassadors of America* selected Yothers as an ideal US representative to the USSR because of her talent and popularity and also because she is part Russian and part American Indian, according to Sabatino. You can't get more American than native American – and her father's Russian ancestry couldn't hurt.

Because the disenchantment of Russian youth has become a problem for their elders, Satabino said, they are looking for a way to relate and are anxious for this tour which features a wholesome American teenage superstar and one of their own leading rock bands. ITN's staple stock, inherited with the US $1.5 million buy in January, are series and feature films, many of them not that new. This, says Sabatino, will continue as one of the three tiers in the new network structure. He will also acquire first-run features and series never seen before in the US, and plans a tier of sport and entertainment specials, documentaries and whatever is unusual and looks good to him. At press time he was negotiating for a half-hour featuring the celebrated Russian Circus clown Oleg Popov.

In the past, he said, ITN shied away from this kind of programme, but that's all changed now. "Frankly our predecessors had a great deal of enthusiasm

"It's a lot of little steps on a long road. We have to be patient."

and made a great effort – from which we have benefitted – but the bottom line is they are bankers and advertising-marketing people and the combination didn't produce a winner."

The difference at which ITN is moving today seems to be the difference between the pace and direction of the old and new management. The new owners certainly have international *smarts*. Two are veterans of ITT Corporation. In fact, the present chairman of ITN's parent company is the

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ITN March programmes at a glance

Feb 28 – Mar 4	SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
00.30 and 16.30 repeat	The Wall St. Journal Rep	Christian Sci Monitor Rep.	Gillette World Sport Special	Germany Today	Black Clouds (Polish)	Curro Jimeniz (Spain)
01.00 and 17.00 repeat	Looking East	This is New Zealand	Hello Warsaw	Hello Austria		
01.30 and 17.30 repeat	Hello Jerusalem	Derrick (German)	Derrick (German)	Derrick (German)	Hello Jerusalem	Tony Dean's Outdoors
02.00 and 18.00 repeat	Discover Australia				Discover Australia	Fishing Texas
02.30 and 18.30 repeat	Derrick (German)	Movie: Home Village (Japanese)	Ein Stuck Himmel (German)	Movie: A Troubled Laughter (Chinese)	This is New Zealand	Gillette World Sport Special
03.00 and 19.00 repeat			Lampiao y Maria Bonita (Portuguese)		Christian Sci. Monitor Rep.	Rodeo Sports Page
03.30 and 19.30 repeat	Newscope/ Japan/Digest				Cervantes (Spanish)	Canadian Sport Fishing
04.00 and 20.00 repeat	Business Nippon					Virgil Ward's Fishing

Mar 6-11	SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
00.30 and 16.30 repeat	The Wall St. Journal Rep	Christian Sci Monitor Rep.	Gillette World Cup Special	Germany Today	Black Clouds (Polish)	Curro Jimeniz (Spainish)
01.00 and 17.00 repeat	Looking East	This is New Zealand	Business Nippon	Hello Austria		
01.30 and 17.30 repeat	Hello Jerusalem	Derrick (German)	Derrick (German)	Derrick (German)	Hello Jerusalem	Tony Dean's Outdoors
02.00 and 18.00 repeat	Discover Australia				Discover Australia	Fishing Texas
02.30 and 18.30 repeat	Derrick (German)	Movie: The Goby that Soared thru the Rain (Korean)	Ein Stuck Himmel (German)	Movie: Naval Battle of 1894 (Chinese)	This is New Zealand	Gillette World Cup Special
03.00 and 19.00 repeat			Lampiao y Maria Bonita (Portuguese)		Christian Sci. Monitor Rep.	Rodeo Sports Page
03.30 and 19.30 repeat	Newscope/ Japan/Digest				Cervantes (Spanish)	Canadian Sport Fishing
04.00 and 20.00 repeat	Business Nippon	Sea of Galilee				Virgil Ward's Fishing (USA)

Mar 13-18	SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
00.30 and 16.30 repeat	The Wall St. Journal Rep	Christian Sci Monitor Rep.	Gillette World Sport Special	Germany Today	Black Clouds (Polish)	Curro Jimeniz (Spanish)
01.00 and 17.00 repeat	Looking East	This is New Zealand	Business Nippon	Hello Austria		
01.30 and 17.30 repeat	Hello Jerusalem	Derrick (German)	Derrick (German)	Derrick (German)	Hello Jerusalem	Tony Dean's Outdoors
02.00 and 18.00 repeat	Discover Australia				Discover Australia	Fishing Texas
02.30 and 18.30 repeat	Derrick (German)	Movie: A Silent Love (Dutch)	Ein Stuck Himmel (German)	Movie: Cutting the Moonlight (Korean)	This is New Zealand	Gillette World Sport Special
03.00 and 19.00 repeat			Lampiao y Maria Bonita (Portuguese)		Christian Sci. Monitor Rep.	Rodeo Sports Page
03.30 and 19.30 repeat	Newscope/ Japan/Digest				Cervantes (Spanish)	Canadian Sport Fishing
04.00 and 20.00 repeat	Business Nippon					Virgil Ward's Fishing (USA)

Mar 20-25	SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
00.30 and 16.30 repeat	The Wall St. Journal Rep	Christian Sci Monitor Rep.	Gillette World Cup Special	Germany Today	Black Clouds (Polish)	Curro Jimeniz (Spanish)
01.00 and 17.00 repeat	Looking East	This is New Zealand	Business Nippon	Hello Austria		
01.30 and 17.30 repeat	Hello Jerusalem	Derrick (German)	Derrick (German)	Derrick (German)	Hello Jerusalem	Tony Dean's Outdoors
02.00 and 18.00 repeat	Discover Australia				Discover Australia	Fishing Texas
02.30 and 18.30 repeat	Derrick (German)	Movie: 1981 Counting Sheep (Czech)	Ein Stuck Himmel (German)	Movie: The Sore Fingers (Korean)	This is New Zealand	Gillette World Cup Special
03.00 and 19.00 repeat			Lampiao y Maria Bonita (Portuguese)		Christian Sci. Monitor Rep.	Rodeo Sports Page
03.30 and 19.30 repeat	Newscope/ Japan/Digest				Cervantes (Spanish)	Canadian Sport Fishing
04.00 and 20.00 repeat	Business Nippon					Virgil Ward's Fishing (USA)

Breaking the barrier

▶continued from p14

former president and CEO of ITT. He is Lyman C. Hamilton, Jr. and before ITT he was with the International Bank and its subsidiary, the International Finance Corporation, in Washington, DC. He began his career with the US Federal Bureau of the Budget in the International and Intelligence Programmes Division. He holds a MPA from Harvard and a BA from Principia College.

Hart Perry, Vice Chairman of World Television, is Director of Energy Assets International and former President and DEO of SoGen Swiss International Corporation, an investment banking firm of which he was also director. At ITT he was the Executive VP of Finance and a member of the board.

Before directing sales and marketing for *The Wall Street Journal Report*, at Dow Jones & Company, Sabatino was a sales and marketing consultant to the firm with responsibilities in television, cable and telemarketing. He launched the *International 900 Dow Jones Market Report Dial-It-Service*. He has also been a broadcast marketing consultant for numerous companies, including Turner Broadcast Systems; F.A. Hayhurst Ltd., Canada; and Young & Rubican advertising agency in New York.

At a meeting sponsored by the New York Television Academy (Academy of Television Arts & Sciences), Mr. Hamilton said frankly that his knowledge of the television marketplace is limited, but he felt he had a fair idea of what global marketing is about. Among the three principals, this would seem to be a fair assessment. And of them, Sabatino, who is most knowledgeable in television programming and marketing, has been given the responsibility of developing and supervising the network.

In the short time since he took over (two months, when he spoke with *TV World*) he has made some serious changes. "We inherited stations and many of them have gotten into some bad habits. They're a little lackadaisical for one thing. And they are accustomed to getting their information far too much upstream. They want things six and eight weeks ahead of time, which is ridiculous. They're basically pampered."

He said they are being advised that they will now take the feed "clean," and the network is being very careful about how it chooses new affiliates. Although ITN will continue to produce personalised on-air promotions for stations during the rest of this year, Sabatino says he won't have the luxury of continuing it next year. It will become too costly.

"Instead of running a two minute network promotion I may have to cut it down to thirty seconds. That two minutes will become a very expensive piece of time. The other networks right now only do that during the upfront season, then they pull them out. That's only a two and a half week period. You eat up all your inventory. It's costly."

Sabatino says he also scrapped a lot of the print material made from the old catalogue and has gone back to square one to secure new material.

ZDF's 'Derrick': reaches nearly 22 million homes

Because ITN is an advertiser-supported network, Satabino has given a top priority to measuring its performance. His present advertisers are direct-response clients who are able to measure the cost-effectiveness of their buys by the number of responses they get to the spots.

"But in order for us to survive I must be able to measure at least the top 50 markets and identify the programmes being cherry-picked and acquire profiles."

National advertisers, he knows, need information on households and ratings. He expects to have done that by the time this story is in print, using Megabase Nielsen reports during the sweep periods four times a year, and the Nielsen Station Index.

"As long as we can identify time and day, Nielsen can monitor the programmes and track them back to us," said Sabatino, noting that until now ITN really didn't know what programmes were being picked off the daily feed or where they were or who was watching them. They now require affidavits of performance, which they will give to the rating service.

ITN's shareholders are international, and there is a considerable investment from those in the UK. Asked when ITN would start making money for them, Sabatino said that by August he expected to be making more money each month than he spends. The August target date represents the close of ITN's fiscal year, and he plans to close the books on a profit, turning the original investment into a plus by then.

Then next year he will go global. He is already lining up multinational clients, he said, and is aware of their need for numbers. "Numbers are easier to get over there than over here. AGB Research has been there; they've had people meters longer and they are much more documented. If they give me a time slot I can give them a rating guarantee. Europeans are good at that. What they don't understand is the numbering system in our country. We're working on it."

Until ITN's distribution system is ready in other countries, Sabatino will continue to sell what he can where he can internationally, concentrating on his domestic network. In the meantime he can estimate the number of households and begin to line up advertising support. And he is establishing global offices.

"It's a lot of little steps on a long road," he says. "We have to be patient. We must be diligent. Diligence is the key. The former owners were not diligent. That's why I now own the company." ■

International TV Network, Tamco Suite, 645 Fifth Avenue, New York NY 10022

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Turning twenty-one

SINCE the first day of spring, Belgium has had a new TV station. To be more accurate, RTBF's second network, Tele 2, has been completely reorganised into Télé 21.

There will be virtually no in-house production on the channel, so it is expected that the additional costs would be limited this year to BF 60 million (US$ 1.7 million). Télé 21 resolutely decided to rebroadcast such old series very much appreciated in the past by the public such as *The Persuaders* with Roger Moore and Tony Curtis, *Naked City*-an American series shot in black and white in the late fifties and Agatha Christie's inspired *Partners in Crime* from LWT. Télé 21 will also show documentaries and other magazines that a stringent programming schedule on the main channel, RTBF 1, never permitted to broadcast.

Tele 21: similar target audiences as those from Radio 21

Big events previously shown on Télé 2 will remain a priority on Télé 21, no matter what series or magazine might usually be scheduled on a specific day. This specially applies to sports and culture. But events will also be created, eg with a special week devoted to the sixties or another on the North/South problems within the framework of the Council of Europe.

Types of programmes rarely shown on RTBF 1 are planned on Télé 21, such as a regular jazz music magazine or programmes with a strong cultural identity or some language barriers like *Spitting Image* which will be shown subtitled with the original soundtrack. The senior management insist that the channel should have a strong European perspective (Robert Stéphane, head of RTBF, is also general secretary of the European Cinema and Television Year). There will be among others things a European *Ciné-club* on Tuesday as well as a European magazine the following day.

The name of Télé 21 has been chosen to suggest a relationship with Radio 21, the fourth youth-orientated RTBF music and news radio station (21 stands for the channel occupied on FM). The same dynamic rhythm will be used for Télé 21 without any anchors appearing on screen, but with a control room using a Betacart system which was somewhat critcised by the trade unions a few months ago. An Elton John concert is scheduled for April 8, with simultaneous stereo sound broadcasting on Radio 21. And RTBF is looking for similar target audiences as those from Radio 21 for the new channel.

RTBF managers say that high ratings are not a priority of Télé 21; their objective is to reach an average five per cent audience share while Télé 2 rarely exceeded 1 per cent. But it is clear that the public service station has in mind to test and develop for instance different forms of sponsoring, in particular around the "special event". Télé 21 is managed by a small group of members from the RTBF informally organised, in an attempt to work with less hierarchical structures.

Télé 21 will be on holidays in July and August, except for some live events. It will resume for the Olympic Games. ■

Animation motivation

DURING the Brussels animation festival in February, a European Association of the Animated Film was set up by members from 11 countries (Luxembourg wasn't represented) in the European Community.

It shouldn't come as a surprise that this association, under the umbrella of the European Commission and its Media programme, drew its first breath in Belgium. The reputation of the country in the field of animated film is well established.

But Belgium also has its problems, several studios working hard to survive and even one, Penfilms in Ghent, falling bankrupt last year. This certainly motivated the creation of a nine-member Belgium committee, under the chairmanship of Raoul Servais which took several months from the Belgian French-speaking community and the European Commission (BF 2 million — $60,000 — each), to pave the way for the European association.

Five working groups have been constituted first by the end of the general assembly in February. These groups are in charge of determining practical measures which will be launched, once approved, during the next meeting of the European association, mid-June at the Annecy festival.

During the last three years, five major animation studios, mostly in France, were in serious trouble, had to shut down or were declared bankrupt (Penfilms, B22, Image Ordinateur, France Animation, Belokapi). A working group will make propositions on what kind of help should be developed in order to guarantee their survival in the future.

Whereas in the United States the production costs of an animated film are covered by 80 per cent in its own market, in Europe, even if a film were sold everywhere in the twelve countries, only 30 per cent of the production costs would be covered. Finding partial solutions to this problem is the objective of a second group. A third group deals with training, another group will work on the ways to make people aware of the problems the animated film encounters in Europe and a last one will concentrate on research and development. ■

European Association of the Animated Film, Rue Defacqz 50, 1050 Brussels.

Ratings rock the system

France is currently gripped with ratings fever. Paul Michaud's notebook reveals the latest developments

ALTHOUGH France's TF1 was privatised a year ago, the full impact seems to have hit the French only during the past few weeks.

Much of this new awareness is due to the decision by TF1, announced in February, to remove from its daily 13.00 hours news show Yves Mourousi, the anchorman who has held the post for 13 years and, with the French TV public, has become synonymous with creative journalism.

Privatisation

But, as TF1 sheepishly revealed, privatisation has brought in its wake the Audimat, the French ratings point, and the ultimate arbiter of who or what remains in TF1's lineup. As in Mourousi's case, a drop of only one or two points in one's score can mean instant replacement by a programme or personality considered more desirable by the audience.

Although TF1's action has been soundly denounced by the French press, the network was able to point out that it remains France's most-watched channel, with almost half of the public watching it regularly. When it comes to how the public reacts to TF1's programmes, only half as many of its viewers seem to have anything positive to say but reserve their compliments for arch rival Antenne 2, which they watch only 25 per cent of the time.

Criticism

Still, the timing of TF1's announcement, and its refusal to give any serious consideration to recent criticism could well lead to its privatisation being called into question if a Socialist government is in power after May's presidential election. A spokesman for the Socialist Party has announced the possibility, in one form or another, of TF1's return to public service status, if Prime Minister Jacques Chirac's right-wing coalition fails.

Among other decisions expected to be taken after the May 8 election, whether the Socialists win or not, is a complete overhaul of FR3. There are those who would like it to expand its regional operations, and those, like Michel Péricard, an audiovisual adviser to Chirac, who would like to see the network privatised. Others have proposed that FR3 merge its operations with those of la Sept, France's much praised cultural channel that, for the moment at least, must broadcast its programmes on FR3. As for la Sept, *TV World* has learned that it may be merged with TV5, France's sole satellite TV channel, *before* the presidential election.

The *other* Channel 5, La Cinq, has also been much in the news of late because of a gigantic FFr750 million (US$ 142 million) operating deficit for its first 10 months of operation, blamed in large part on French press baron Robert Hersant, who, it seems, has not been talking for several months to co-owners Silvio Berlusconi and Jérome Seydoux. They, in turn, have been in the headlines having presented the French government with a bill for FFr3.7 billion (US$700 million) in indemnities which they say they deserve for having had to give up control of La Cinq in 1986 and then having to share it with Hersant in a new operating arrangement.

Berlusconi: Demanding FFr 3.7 billion

If the French government is upset with Berlusconi's and Seydoux's action, it is because in re-awarding partial control of La Cinq to them in 1986, they thought it would dissuade them from seeking the indemnities that were recoverable according to the original agreement. FFr3.7 billion is the amount Berlusconi and Seydoux feel they could have earned had their contract been allowed to stay in force for the 18 years they had been awarded.

Watchdog

Meanwhile, the country's audiovisual watchdog, the CNCL, has announced that while the French produce annually only 130 films, they watched, during 1987, almost 10 times as many, 1291, broken down into 158 for La Cinq, 166 for Antenne 2, 167 for TFI, 196 for M6, 216 for FR3, and 388 for Canal Plus.

The tough competition for the French TV public has resulted in an interesting situation at Médiamétrie. Until now France's sole official ratings organisation. After revelations made last summer by the satirical weekly *Le Canard enchainé* that Médiamétrie's results were easy to manipulate, and therefore unreliable, the Centre d'études des supports de publicité, (CESP) made up of advertisers and representatives of the print press, decided to select its own ratings organisation. They chose the *bouton-pressoir,* the push-button device that indicates who is watching TV, what they are watching and at what time. This would be able, in theory, to provide more reliable ratings.

Finance

CESP went on to choose the British organisation AGB, but realised that it could not finance the venture. In the meantime, Médiamétrie, which refused to go along with CESP's selection of AGB, decided to set up a new ratings infrastructure on its own, to be based on the *boutton-poussoir*. This would see the number of households involved double to more than 2,000. With the acquisition of 35 percent of its capital from the Club de Recherche TV (a group of the heavyweights of French advertising), Médiamétrie says it will be able to finance the new ratings set up and looking for an independent operator to install 1000 black boxes by this autumn. ■

Balancing act

The scales are tipping in Channel Three's favour. Gerard O'Dwyer reports on its ability to capture viewers and advertisers.

FINLAND's Channel Three has forecast "a substantial operating profit" for the current financial year. According to the company, advertising sales have "proved the most optimistic plans and forecasts correct, particularly in improving revenue generation from "first-time" TV advertisers. Channel Three's forecasts are not without foundation. The network continues to increase its viewership and ad-related incomes while its impact on the style and format of Finnish TV has been substantial, a fact which has not gone unnoticed by the country's public service channels YLE One and YLE Two.

Reaching over 56 per cent of Finnish households, latest viewer surveys indicate that almost 50 per cent of homes within the network's area of coverage tune into Channel Three each day. This percentage viewing figure continues to grow. The network's main rivals, satellite channels, meanwhile hold a combined percentage of day-viewing in Finland of seven to eight per cent.

Prior to the network's establishment, Channel Three's critics had argued that the 'entertainment channel' concept would fail to catch the imagination of the Finns, reared on the rather plain diet of YLE One and YLE Two documentaries and current affairs programmes. The channel has defied its critics while overtaking YLE Two to become Finland's second most watched channel. Channel Three's arrival also served to improve the quality of output from the country's other commercial media company, MTV. Both MTV and Channel Three have contributed to giving a fresh new look to the home broadcasting industry, adding much welcomed style and polish to programme presentation.

The network has according to Channel Three "struck the right balance" between foreign and domestic programming. Much of Channel Three's entertainment value is derived from foreign programming including US serials *LA Law*, *Murder She Wrote*, *Falcon Crest* and comedy serials such as *Alf*, *Mr. Belvedere* and *New York Lady*. British series include *Smiley's People* and *A Family at War*. The network is also screening re-runs of dated but popular series including *Star Trek* and *Batman*, a strategy that would appear to be

'L.A. Law': right balance

benefitting from a wave of 60's nostalgia in Finland just now.

While the channel boasts a strong international flavour including a number of French, West German and Italian serials, domestic input has not been forgotten. The company has reached agreement with over 24 different Finnish producers since early '87. Some 350 hours of Finnish produced product was screened during last Autumn. Programmes included quiz shows, sports and current affairs chat shows.

Channel Three's decision to liven its format through the screening of three feature length films each week has undoubtedly inspired greater audience interest in the network. While Channel Three has much cause for celebration in achieving much in a relatively short time period, its presentation format is not without fault. A good proportion of nightly domestic input involves 'in-studio' discussions designed to fill in time between main commercial time programmes. The content of such discussions more often than not fringes on boredom, often fragmented by long silences as inexperienced TV presenters battle to strike up conversations with bashful and even more inexperienced guests. ■

The channeling cheats

IT WAS quickly named the 'The Carlos Affair', a huge hoax pulled on the Australian media by . . . the Australian media.

In a dramatic episode of Channel 9's *60 Minutes*, ex-ABC reporter Richard Carleton revealed that the spiritualist and occultist Jose Luis Alvarez, who had packed out a theatre in Sydney's Opera House by claiming to "channel" the spirit of long-dead man called Carlos, was a fake.

But what made it all the stranger was that the *60 Minutes* team had set up the hoax themselves, at a reported cost of over A$50,000, and then gathered round in a finger-pointing circle, taunting fellow journalists for falling victim to their prank.

Unfortunately for Channel Nine, it appeared to have shot itself in the foot, for the two programmes that did the most to fuel the media hoo-hah surrounding the charlatan channeller were its own: *The Today Show*, and *A Current Affair*.

Carleton's claim was that the whole sham was devised to show how easily the media and the public can be fooled; he then spent thousands of dollars ensuring that some routine fact-checking by rival programmes would be intercepted by *60 Minutes* staffers in America. The help of arch-sceptic and conjuror James Randi was elicited; an American radio interview was faked and sent to Australian reporters; finally Alvarez (in reality an ordinary nobody from Miami) and his "manager" secured themselves front-page and prime-time publicity by throwing a glass of water over *The Today Show*'s host in a neatly contrived "argument".

Australia was Carlos-mad for a week. Then Carleton pricked the astral bubble and made many of his rivals and colleagues look very silly.

There were red faces, and one or two rolling heads. Channel Nine's head of current affairs also works for the company which produces *A Current Affair* for Channel Nine, one of the duped programmes. A furious Mike Willessee, who owns and presents *A Current Affair* sacked him double-quick.

And many believe that the reputation of Australian current affairs has been dealt a hard blow, from which it will not easily recover.

"The Carlos Affair . . ." wrote Sydney's *Daily Mirror*, "must be one of the most ridiculous, most damaging happenings in recent media history."

Then again, the *Mirror* was fooled too . . ." ■

H-B's great work divide

Although owned by the same company, Hanna Barbera's Australian operations competes with the US for business, Ross Welford reports.

NINE thousand miles from its home in Los Angeles, America's Hanna-Barbera Inc. has an unlikely competitor. From offices and studios on Sydney's north shore, Hanna Barbera Australia Pty produces animated material for the US television market, competing directly with its stateside sister.

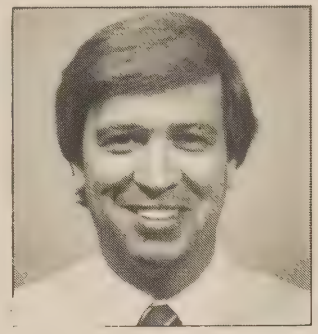
The relationship between the two companies, as Hanna Barbera Australia's General Manager Keith Amor explained, is "strictly business. We run a very autonomous operation." That is in spite of sharing a common "half parent" in the Taft organisation, which wholly owns Hanna Barbera Inc., and half-owns the Australian operation, with James Hardie Industries PLC.

Hanna Barbera Australia was founded early in the last decade, which saw labour costs in the US rising to a level where producers were looking overseas for cheaper places to produce their material. In 1972, Bill Hanna was instrumental in establishing Hanna Barbera Pty, since when the company has produced over 300 half-hours of animated material, and grown to be the largest animator in the southern hemisphere.

Now the company's main activity is to produce cartoon shows for sale into the US market, as well as acting as a production house for other animators – including Hanna Barbera in the US. "We have to compete with the Asian studios to get Bill Hanna's work!" said Keith Amor.

Recent shows made by Amor's company include *Teenwolf, Berenstain Bears* and episodes of *Storybreak,* all for the CBS network; and *Pound Puppies, Scooby Doo* and *The Velveteen Rabbit* for ABC. Other network and subcontract work ranges from *Lucky Luke* (for Gaumont), *The Pink Panther,* to Hanna Barbera favourites, *The Flintstones.*

"Financially," declared Amor, "we don't take unnecessary risks. We operate a presale arrangement with US television so that costs are covered." Further sales, such as to the Australian market, are therefore pure profit. Overseas sales for Hanna Barbera Australia are handled by the Taft-owned Worldvision, except for the company's "local area" of Australia, New Zealand and South East Asia.



KeithAmer: no uncessary risks

Jonno and Dano: hosts of 'Have a go."

Peter Luck, presenter of 'Bicentennial Minutes?

In a bid to become less dependent on the animated form, Hanna Barbera Australia has recently made programmes in the live action format, most notably with this years *Bicentennial Minutes,* a series of very short films on the theme of Australia's 200th birthday for Channel 7, and last year's *Have A Go.* The latter was an ambitious, off-beat talent contest, also on Channel 7. While it rated well in Sydney, it did not do well enough in other areas to be renewed, to the great disappointment of Hanna Barbera Pty's head of live action, Ben Cardillo. His next project, however, is *Dollars And Sense* which he describes as a "game show with a twist" but would not elaborate further.

A gross success, twice over

AUSTRALIANS are fond of reminding visitors that theirs is a country the size of the USA, with a population the size of London's.

TV producers are only too aware of the fact: the country is simply not populous enough to support a huge indigenous industry. Succeeding in the high-cost area of animation is doubly rewarding, therefore, for Sydney's Yoram Gross Studios, 20 years old this year.

Yeram Gross with 'Dot'

Difficult task

Combining television sales with cinema releasing and video rentals and sell-through, the studio has succeeded in the difficult task of making animation profitable.

"We only handle the production here, nothing else," declared Sandra Gross, who emigrated to Australia from Israel with her husband Yoram in 1968. "We do not do the sales ourselves."

Each year, the company produces about two full-length family oriented films, combining animation with live action, typically on a wildlife theme, such as *Dot and the Kangaroo, Dot and the Koala* or *The Little Convict* with Rolf Harris, sales of which are handled on the world markets by Cori International.

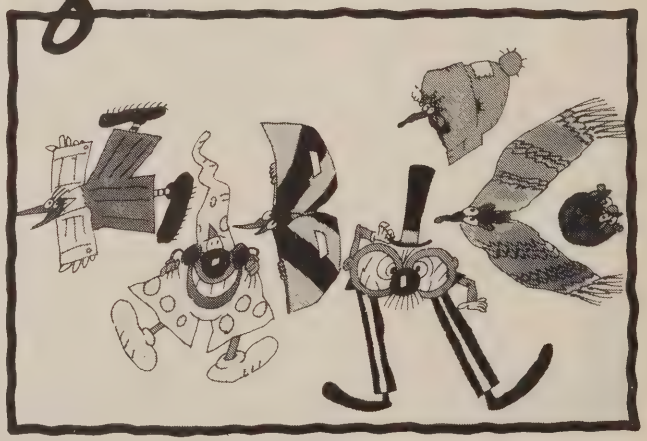
Sandra Gross estimated that around 50 per cent of the companies income came from the US market, notably the Disney and HBO cable channels, and the CBS/Fox video label. A further 30 per cent comes from Australia, where the company's films have a wide release theatrically, followed by a very affordable A$20 (US$15) video sell-through price. The rest comes in from European markets.

Fantasy

At peak times, the studio will employ around 70 people and will typically make a movie for between A$3 and A$5 million (US$2-3.5 million)

The company's latest project is a fairytale fantasy weaving together many traditional stories. It has the working title of *Cinderella,* but Sandra Gross was quick to assert that its commercial title will be changed to avoid confusion with the Disney original.

Coming Soon



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Hot novice

State-of-the art technology is the name of the game for one new young Canadian company – but it must have soul, Daphne Lavers reports.

TOPIX Computer Graphics and Animation started up in Toronto in January, joining the list of hot, young companies on the Canadian production scene.

But while Topix may be a novice its principals aren't. Partner James Snelling was director of engineering for Toronto's multilingual television station, CFMT, and in engineering with CITY-TV prior to that. Snelling was also project manager of the Toronto space experience, Tour of the Universe, a pet project of CITY's Moses Znaimer. And president Chris Wallace was involved in games creation for the software cable network, NABU.

Together the two are running Topix, with state-of-the-art three-D computer Wavefront technology, as well as on- and offline editing capability.

The video production industry is Topix' primary target market to start, and the company is already handling a new CG-created look for an Ontario television station, a half-hour broadcast special intros and extros for a federal government department, as well as the graphics look for a CBC current affairs series called *Democracy*. But the company's interests run somewhat beyond conventional computer graphics and animation, and another of its start-up projects involves the creation of a one-meter square three-D animated hologram whose elements move as you walk past.

"The name of the game is to focus attention on the things you're good at."

Holography, the integration of cell animation into conventional computer graphics animation and architectural modelling are areas of specialization Topix intends to get into. And even in those areas, Topix intends to do things differently.

For example, in architectural modelling, Snelling hopes to be able to integrate live-action with computer modelling, which in effect combines live-action with special effects computer graphics. A building created on computer, interior and exterior, would actually, on the reel, show a live-shoot scene simulation.

"It's certainly integrating synthetic imagery with live action," said Snelling. "I've been an engineer for a number of years and I've always had a bent towards the creative side and the engineering side – and the creative side and the production side." That bent was exhibited in the Tour of the Universe simulated space flight, which involved actual flight simulation and physical realities. Snelling's experience however, extends around the globe, as he is currently involved in a Swiss government closed-circuit direct broadcast satellite network, as well as a project involving broadcast design for a Far East consortium. Snelling is fully acquainted with the world-wide state of the computer graphics art.

"The early stages of computer graphics were a display of hardware capability as opposed to creative capabilities," he said. "I was recently in Japan and it is obvious that in terms of computer graphics hardware, they are close to being the equal of North American technology. There is no doubt. Where they lack is in the creative elements. It's a lot of very expensive hardware being made to make very clean-looking images with no guts, and no soul and no story to tell. Anybody can make hardware, anybody can buy hardware, not everybody can use it."

Making images and telling stories is what Topix wants to do but perhaps in ways that haven't been tried much before.

"The Canadian production industry is moving in a very clear fashion towards focussing its production capabilities. Whereas in days past, people would go out and spend millions of dollars in hardware to provide the client with everything he needs under one roof, those days are behind us. Nobody is in a position to spend millions of dollars to provide a facility and millions of dollars on an annual basis to keep up with current technology in hopes that they can get $10 more an hour. That's not the name of the game anymore. The name of the game is to focus your attention on the things that you're good at and concentrate on those. If you need other facilities, you go out and you buy them."

And if you don't want to buy them, you move them in next door, which is also a novel approach Topix is taking to business – along the lines of the other Toronto production facilities which see a number of different, related companies under one roof. In the Topix offices are also D'Allen Productions whose principal Don Allen recently completed a rock music special on singer Luba (see piece on Cambium Productions) and Video Works, an industrial video group.

"Anybody can make hardware, anybody can buy hardware, not everybody can use it."

"The synergy (between companies) is one you might not see in the United States, where you have several people who would in theory, appear to be in conflict of interest, but in actual fact, it's an amalgamation that works for everybody. It costs less, you get it done faster, you end up eventually with a better quality product and ultimately the client wins," said Snelling. Topix has working affiliations with a number of other Toronto production companies, and indeed, with other computer graphics facilities, to which the company has already turned over work it did not feel at this point, because of its start-up status, it could handle.

"The Toronto market is certainly a competitive market – it's not a cutthroat market and it's not a bureaucratic market," he said. "It's a very relaxed open atmosphere that is conducive to allowing the creative elements to permeate the production."

The open atmosphere is another element Topix has adopted, actually from the computer industry.

"Topix works on the premise that it's very much 'open architecture' whereby the producer or creative director can come and sit with our internal creative director and produce the product . . . so that you have direct, one-to-one input into what you get."

Where does Topix intend to go? Topix president Chris Wallace notes that video production works in real time.

"Our ideal is to get the technology that will allow us to do graphics while you wait . . ." ■

James Driscoll with two characters from The Shoe People

The shoes with the stamp of success

THE Shoe People originally created by James Driscoll for his children nine years ago are marching from strength to strength.

A gold medal at the International Film and Television Festival Awards as the best children's TV series, in New York last November, a nomination at this years BAFTA awards for the best animation and it's in its second series on TV-am's *Wide Awake* Club with a contract that runs until 1990.

This small company, Shoe People Limited, based in the Midlands, UK, is the first British firm to be taken on by the Licensing Corporation of America (LCA), which has a licensing programme to promote its products in the States, Europe, Australia, and New Zealand.

More than 70 companies, such as Action Toys and Games Limited, Boots Company PLC, and Pirelli Limited, are using the Shoe People on their character merchandise. They are appearing on 250 products this year, on anything from footware to nightware to alarm clocks.

With all this and a monthly comic with an ever increasing circulation and sales of more than two million books besides, the Shoe People can claim to be one of the fastest growing companies in character merchandising.

BBC takes Barney

A NEW animation series has had its contract finalised with the BBC and is scheduled for transmission at the end of 1988.

Barney, about the life of an old English sheepdog, is being produced by John Coutes famous for *The Snowman* and *When The Wind Blows*. TVC are doing the animation.

The idea came originally from Shirley Anne Lewis, a singer, who once knew an old English sheepdog called Barney. She is writing the music for the new programme and has no previous involvement with TV.

A rough 30 second pilot has created an interest with stations around the world, although none could be named. Talking was at a "delicate" stage said Gillian Akester spokesperson for Link Licensing Limited who are handling world-wide distribution rights.

There has also been a strong interest in Character licensing; Octopus (Methuen) are publishing, Coloroll are designing a range of wallpaper, Golden Bear are producing a number of soft toys, and Boots will be releasing a range of nursery wear.

The 13 × 5 minute series is just a start. Gillian Akester was confident of success, saying that as soon as money came in from the first series, they could begin work on a second.

Barney: Illustration taken from the book

Cinar lays a mousetrap

MONTREAL-based Cinar has just completed a brand new facility which it hopes will help bring Montreal up to par with Toronto production facilities.

Cinar, started in New York in 1976, is primarily a distribution company which handles a lot of animation, family programming and BBC programming in English Canada. The company, run by the husband and wife team of Micheline Charest and Ron Weinberg, handles product in French and English, which provides some unique properties.

Squeezed out

"We started in the area of post-production and repackaging about three years ago," said Charest, "when as an independent distributor, we were finding ourselves squeezed out of the market place and not being able to compete successfully for new product to distribute."

Repackaging was the 'better mousetrap' Cinar developed to position itself in the marketplace. The repackaging involves re-editing, translating, dubbing and audio post production and the new facility should be a boon.

"Originally the concept was a small in-house recording studio – nothing special," said Charest. "But as the project grew, we started feeling that Montreal was in serious need of a new sound post-production facility, and that since it was, we would try to build an integrated facility that would be a sound post-production facility for the medium of television."

Cinar brought in Swiss audio engineer Tom Hideley to handle the accoustics for production rooms; installed four Studer Revox boards and an SSL; and built the editing rooms to function either independently or networked together. The $3.5 million, 18,000 square foot facility is slated for an official opening April 14.

Equity

"It made sense to build this because we can use it as a production house to buy ourselves equity in other productions, so it gives us a tool in co-production," said Charest.

Last year, Cinar completed 52 half-hour episodes of *The Wizard of Oz*, with the animation itself done in Japan. This year, the company is co-producing 26 animated half-hours called *Smoggies*, with France's Initiale Groupe. And currently in development is a 26 half-hour sketch comedy prime time series, along with plans for a movie-of-the week titled *Time of Their Lives* focusing on Canada's Dionne quintuplets.

Cinar's capabilities provide the company with advantages it hopes to capitalise on, particularly with its new facility shared by Quebec film-maker Renee Malo. "Our ability as a distributor allows us to work on dubbing with a different eye compared to other companies who have no experience in the international market," Charest said. "That's important in animation because at times the sound is 50 percent of perception."

Nature fables from Filmfair

FILMFAIR Communications will be handling the worldwide distribution of new line-up of animated productions for children's television.

Including in the new line-up is the Central Television commissioned series entitled *Windfalls*, which is now almost finished after being twelve months in the making. The series, aimed at pre-school children, is based around characters made from flora and will start transmission this Autumn.

All backgrounds, scenery, and characters are formed from dried flowers, leaves and barks – collected over the past two years by the programme creator Jenny Kenna who scoured the Welsh countryside for the necessary materials. Each character has been given a personality in keeping with the plant from which it was made.

Using the 'multiplane' filming technique where sheets of glass are suspended at intervals above the background scenery, each story requires the positioning of hundreds of flowers and leaves. The characters and the surrounding foliage are then animated simultaneously on the different levels of glass to give depth of field and a wider scope for animation.

The series (13 x 10 minutes episodes) aims to give pre-school children a basic introduction to the countryside and familiarisation with plants and flowers, by telling tales about them in a fable like form.

Also due for transmission in Autumn 1989 is *Bangers and Mash*, a cell animation project based on the antics of two chimps who are forever getting involved in monkey business. The stories are written by Paul Groves, and based on the best selling pre-school Punch cartoonist Ed McLachlan, music has been written for the series by the cockney duo Chas and Dave, who are considering releasing the track on record.

Film Fair Productions has also completed a 30 minute animated television special, collection of tittle-tattle stories of woodland adventures featuring this year's Toy of the Year, *The Sylvanian Families*. Rabbits, moles, and squirrels are just some of the woodland creatures which have been brought to life by the combination of narrator Bernard Cribbins, and the FilmFair stop-frame model animation team.

Windfall (top) and The Sylvanian families: new animation from Filmfair

Tugs at TVS

BEFORE an ITV company takes on the BBC in the ratings game, there is an initial battle; how to beat your fellow ITV companies to get your show on air.

This is particularly the case with the children's area, where there are only 10.5 network hours a week available. TVS, the south-eastern operator, is ITV's third largest producer of children's shows. Even a seat on the Children's Network Committee – the panel which selects the shows to be networked – doesn't necessarily guarantee success, according to Nigel Pickard, TVS' head of children's. "Obviously it is the BBC we set out to beat, but the selection process certainly gives the programmes an initial testing," said Pickard.

Although he believes it is very hard to co-produce children's shows, he and the head of co-productions Anne Harris made a trip to the US in 1987 to investigate possible co-ventures and pre-sales. "The biggest shift for me between the US and the UK was that the head of children's is regarded in the US purely as the animation buyer!" said Harris.

Pickard thinks that independent companies in the UK will grow into prolific producers of children's material – and perhaps the natural partners for companies such as TVS.

TVS is going all out for non-violent, non-controversial family programming – "the best example of the kind of thing we'd like to do is *Anne of Green Gables*" – and Pickard believes that realistically any co-productions will have to be with Anglophone partners. "What schedulers have to learn though is where you place this kind of programme."

Animation co-production from TVS and Henson: Fraggle Rock

TVS' two major projects currently are a pilot for a children's soap set in a children's hospital. This show, which would run at two weekly half-hours will be aimed at 10-year-olds upwards. "It will cover issues that involve that age group. It will be sound realistic drama, but we will draw the line at certain topics; there will be no abortions, for example," said Pickard.

Tugs is a 13 x 30mins series which combines live-action with model animation. Set in a sea-port at the turn of the century, it is based on true shipping stories from around the world, and is aimed at an 8-10 year old audience. The animation scenes are being shot in a 45ft x 20ft tank, and Pickard is very excited about the show. "I know it doesn't really sound like a fascinating programme, but it's completely different when you see the live-action/model combination."

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Top of the class

Homework completed, the new children's cable service is off to a good start. Bill Third reports

WITH amazing alacrity and surprising speed, Kindernet, a new Benelux-based satellite-to-cable broadcaster has got off the ground and been on the air since March 1 1988.

Kindernet is a dedicated children's station, and will broadcast to cable networks via Intelsat V, from its position of 27.5 degrees West at a signal frequency of 11.135 gHz.

Founder and moving force behind Kindernet is Dennis Livson, once of Finland, but now a moving force on the independent producer's scene. Dennis Livson's company Telecable Benelux is one of the three shareholders in Kindernet, the other two being very large and well-known names: Fuji Eight, the largest commercial station in Japan and WH Smith, one of the UK's largest newsagents and booksellers, increasingly active in new media.

"A satellite channel free of advertising and providing non-violent programming"

"The idea behind Kindernet was to create a satellite channel for children up to 13 years of age, free of advertising and providing non-violent programming, in their own language; in this case Dutch. We are trying to interest more cable operators in the 'low-pay' concept, whereby there is a modest charge per household, that will be collected through the cable operation," says Ard Hesselink who is responsible for programming.

At the moment, Kindernet is being taken by the first Luxembourg network as well as the cable networks of the Dutch cities of Rijswijk, and Zwolle. More negotiations are in an advanced stage with 20 other municipal cable networks.

"Our non-violent policy, plus the horizontal programming, means that parents can leave their children to watch television on their own, safe in the knowledge that they are not soaking up the violent imagery of a video nasty variant," says Hesselink.

"The minefield of broadcasting politics in the Netherlands"

Looking to the future, Kindernet hopes to add audio channels in different languages so that it can increase scope of coverage. At the moment, the programming is put together in Amsterdam, although Kindernet's main offices are in Antwerp and Luxembourg and the signal is actually beamed up to Intelsat V from London. The marketing co-operation with W H Smith means that a complete package can be put together and offered to cable operators as a channel filling deal. For example, Kindernet from 7.00 to 10.00, Lifestyle for the modern European housewife from 10.00 to 16.00 and and Screensport from 16.00 to 01.00.

"Right now, the Kindernet signal is not scrambled. The whole concept of 'low-pay', and it really is low at 40 Dutch cents a month (US 25 cents) plus the lack of advertising and violence, shows that it is possible to do things in a new and different way. There is a choice, but it is also a political choice. And in Europe anyway, it is up to the politicians to decide whether in the future advertising will dominate this kind of operation or not," says Hesselink.

Currently, by Dutch law, satellite-cable operations are not allowed to carry advertising aimed specifically at the Netherlands, but this ruling may yet prove to be in conflict with EEC laws on

continued on p38►

KINDERNET
The schedule
March 21-27

Mon 21
07:00 The Smurfs
07:30 The Swiss Family Robinson
08:00 The Spinning Top
08:30 Nathalie
09:00 Once Upon A Time ... Space
09:30 Documentary "Invisible Life"

Tue 22
07:00 The Smurfs
07:30 The Swiss Family Robinson
08:00 The Spinning Top
08:30 Nathalie
09:00 Once Upon A Time ... Space
09:30 Documentary "Who Trains Whom?"

Wed 23
07:00 The Smurfs
07:30 The Swiss Family Robinson
08:00 The Spinning Top
08:30 Nathalie
09:00 Once Upon A Time ... Space
09:30 Documentary "Panic in The Reeds"

Thur 24
07:00 The Smurfs
07:30 The Swiss Family Robinson
08:00 The Spinning Top
08:30 Nathalie
09:00 Once Upon A Time ... Space
09:30 Doc: "Flowers in Poseidon's Garden"

Fri 25
07:00 The Smurfs
07:30 The Swiss Family Robinson
08:00 The Spinning Top
08:30 Nathalie
09:00 Once Upon A Time ... Space
09:30 Documentary "Serengeti"

Sat 26
07:00 The Smurfs
07:30 The Swiss Family Robinson
08:00 The Spinning Top
08:30 Feature film, "The Tale of a Dog"

Sun 27
07:00 The Smurfs
07:30 The Swiss Family Robinson
08:00 The Spinning Top
08:30 Super Gran
09:00 The Secret Valley
09:30 Bassie & Adriaan

An animated education

Japanese children don't stop watching animation when they grow up. Roger March reports on companies producing for this huge market

IN A LAND that puts a very high premium on education and study, the Japanese parent (read mother) regards television as a treat for little Taro after he finishes, or before he starts, his sums for the day. For the same reason perhaps, there are virtually no conspicuous anti-TV lobbies trying to reduce the amount of violence in cartoons. All this may explain why the world-wide trend toward "soft" animation is still a curiosity in Japan.

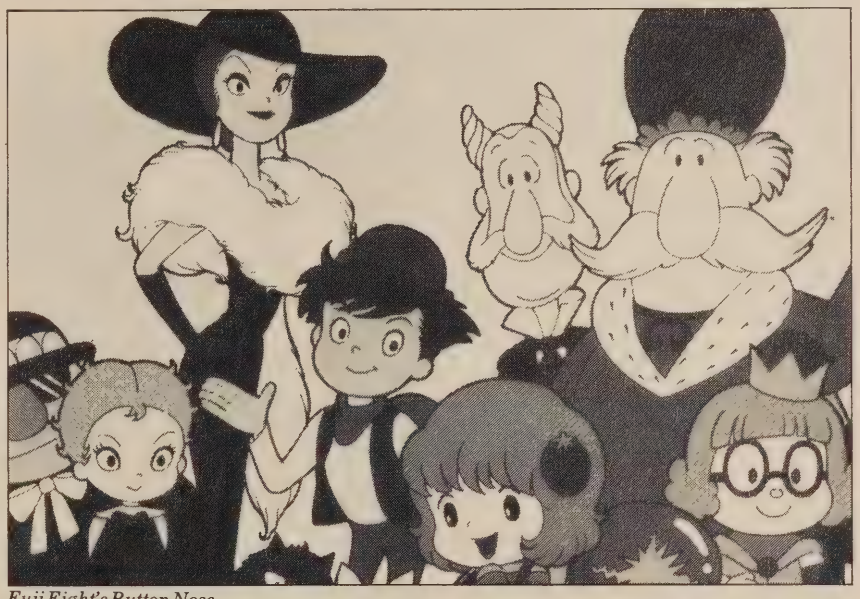
Comics

In Japan, all successful, home-grown television cartoon series (as opposed to world-famous classic children's tales) begin life as comics. Kohichi Sekizaki of Fuji Eight, the sales arm of the giant Fuji broadcasting network, says no Japanese cartoons are created for television that are not comics originally. "Once we see that a comic is becoming a hit, our production section begins negotiations with the cartoon's rights' holders." For example, *Shonen Jump* is Japan's — probably the world's — best-selling comic magazine. Nearly five million Japanese dig into their pockets every week to buy the three centimetre thick magazine. From beneath its pages have leaped such mega-hits as *Touch*, a 30-minute series which ran for 101 episodes and spawned three movies.

Suggestive

World-famous children's stories, known here as *meisaku*, are another matter. For Nippon Animation, perhaps the only leading Japan leading animation company (there are 10 altogether) whose policy avows the pursuit of high-quality children's entertainment, *meisaku* account for 90 per cent of productions. Yasushi Takasaki, vice-president responsible for international sales, says that the popularity of *meisaku* has been declining in the past three to four years. "On the domestic market, the trend has definitely been toward the more sensational television cartoons — violence and sexually suggestive scenes are common these days. On the other hand," he says, "the shift to softer cartoons in the US has opened up new opportunities there."

In April, HBO, one of America's largest cable networks and apparently eager to better use its quiet 17:00–19:00 time-slot, will begin airing three Nippon Animation productions — *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* (49 half-hours) *Little Women* (48 half-hours) and *The Story of 15 boys* (75-min. animated cartoon), based on Jules Verne's only children's story, *Deux Ans de Vacances*. Probably no other Japanese animation company gives as much consideration to the international market when planning new productions. Unashamedly proud, Takasaki says that Nippon Animation has the best technology in the world, and that only the familiar constraints of money and time prevent it from producing even better cartoons.



Fuji Eight's Button Nose

If Nippon Animation claims to be best producer, Fuji Eight stakes claim to showing the best (-rating) cartoons on Japanese television. "We leave the opposition for dead," says Sekizaki, matter-of-factly. "We run six or seven cartoon series a week, most in the 19:00–19:30 p.m. slot." The company gets most of its cartoons from its parent, Fuji Television. Like mostly cartoon distributors, Fuji does most of its business in Europe, particularly Italy, which Japanese companies penetrated more than 10 years ago when that country's industry was in its infancy.

Fuji, like Nippon Animation, is looking more seriously at the foreign market in general and cable television in particular. On March 1 it commenced Kindernet, the first satellite children's programme in the Dutch language broadcast 7:00–10:00 every morning in the Benelux. (see separate story). Lisa McBride, the only foreign staffer in Fuji Eight, explains: "The Dutch market, with no domestic cable service to speak of, has tremendous potential. The programmes are compiled in Amsterdam and transmitted from the UK via Intelsat V."

Public broadcaster NHK is now flat out trying to flog its satellite television to the Japanese public, so discussion of cartoons revolves around programme style rather than sales efforts. "We are very clear about what we want in our cartoons," says Hideo Ihara, director of International Development in NHK Enterprises (140 staff), an off-shoot of NHK formed three years to coordinate its international operations. "The universal themes of love, friendship and adventure are embodied in all our productions. Violence and sex are of course excluded. Robots are also out."

Unconcerned by ratings, NHK produces just one 52 half-hour series a year. "Only one because there are so many other programmes we want to broad-

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The animation of two generations

Restricted by low budgets and tough censorship ATV and TVB often pull in old foreign product to fill their animation schedules. Maggie Fox reports

HONG KONG children, who enjoy little free space in this crowded, 400-square-mile territory, are a source of worry for television programmers.

Neither ATV nor dominant TVB has a large budget for children's television programming (everyone at both stations treats all budget discussions as a state secret), but both devote time to in-house production and both buy overseas educational programmes.

And as in most other areas here, Japan wins out over the West in animation.

Two reasons are given by Phillip Chow, who heads children's programming at ATV. "The colour combinations and the way they are drawn – they are more delicate and detailed. I think Hong Kong children appreciate this. Also, the way of life in Japan is more similar to the way of life here than American lifestyles.

Most popular at ATV are *Parman* and *Gu Gu Gummo*. On TVB there's *Gegege No Kitaro* and *Doraemon*. They're dubbed into Cantonese, as are the few animated shows imported from the US and UK. TVB also plans to import an animated series from Hungary later this year.

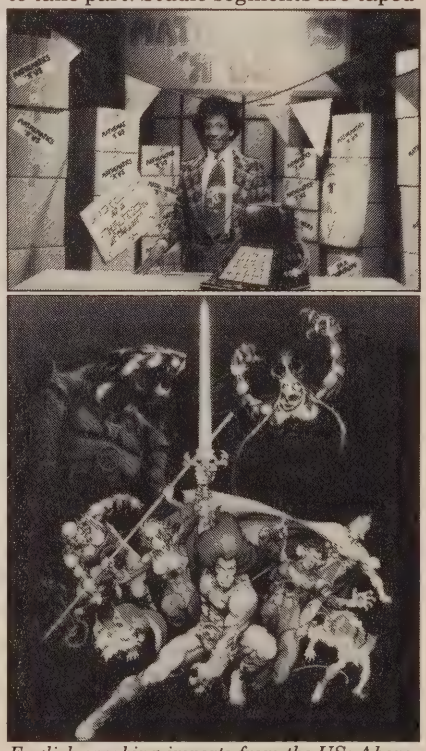
While the imported Japanese cartoons are quite recent, the US imports (shown undubbed on the English channels) are often older than the parents of the children watching. They include *Hercules, Krazy Kat, Popeye* and other *MGM Cartoon Classics*. Cost seems to be the main factor in English-language cartoon choices.

Saturday and Sunday mornings see the heaviest use of animation, but educational-type shows are the priority at both stations. TVB produces 300 hours of children's programming a year, according to Ann Lam, executive producer of children's programmes at TVB. The Cantonese-language Jade Channel gets the most attention, both because 98 per cent of the TV audience is Chinese and because Hong Kong is virtually the only source for Cantonese-lanaguage programming.

The showcase is *Space Shuttle 430*, which airs from 16.30 to 18.00 Monday through Friday, with repeats at 09.00 to 10.30 Tuesday through Saturday. A variety show for children aged 7 to 14, *Space Shuttle 430* includes mini-documentaries, children's drama and games and contests.

"It's not just a programme for them to watch," Lam said. "It is a stepping-stone to go beyond the screen."

The show's five presenters often travel around Hong Kong to produce segments and children are encouraged to take part. Studio segments are taped with a small studio audience. Lam claims an 80 to 90 per cent share for children aged 4 to 14 for the show. She estimates the audience at between 400,000 and 600,000 (Hong Kong's population is 5.5 million.)



English speaking imports from the US: Above, Square One TV (CTW) and Thundercats (Lorimar)

Despite TVB's claims of success, ATV goes head-to-head with its new special Tiger unit. Also a variety show, *STU* (named after a popular Hong Kong police unit) is segmented for age groups. For the youngest group, aged 4 to 8, there are songs and simple games.

Games and sports shows are programmed for the 8 to 12-year-olds with problem-solving and some drama for 10 to 16-year-olds. *STU* is similar in content to TVB's show and airs in the same morning and afternoon time slots. The morning repeats take into account crowded Hong Kong's split school sessions.

English-speaking children can watch imported syndicated shows like *Sesame Street, Pound Puppies,* and *Square One Television* on TVB. There's also the locally-produced *Junior Junction* once a week on TVB, hosted by high school students who are invited in to talk about their lives and interview personalities.

ATV also depends heavily on syndication for its English-speaking children's audience, offering ancient *Lassie* reruns, *Where The Sky Begins* and *Vid Kids*. The locally-produced *Swizzle Street,* a variety show, is aimed at the younger set with songs, games and puppet characters.

Locally-produced animation is almost all educational and is still quite limited. TVB does own an animation studio in China's special economic zone of Shenzen called Jade Animation Production Ltd. The company takes advantage of China's cheap labour to produce the drawings, then films them at TVB's Hong Kong studios. But most two to three minute shorts are produced by the company. TVB is currently running 180 episodes of *Animated Idioms* which, as the title suggests, illustrate Chinese proverbs. *Animated Idioms* is also syndicated for sale to Chinese-language audiences overseas.

The studio contracts out to the US Rankin/Bass company, supplying the drawings for *Thundercats,* an animated space adventure which airs in the US and which Rankin/Bass has sold back to TVB for local airing.

ATV produces even less – some very short animated pieces, usually word definitions or explanations of Chinese characters. Hong Kong childen have little opportunity to fry their brains on TV. Hong Kong's very strict censorship laws allow virtually no violent shows into the territory. Even cartoons are censored, which could account for the age of some of the American shows.

Chow approves of the censorship, saying children have little judgment and tend to imitate their favourite characters. But Lam sees no need. "TV is not God," she said. "They're hypocritical here. They don't put their best resources to children's programming but they complain if something goes wrong." ■

Aim to strike gold

A new puppet-maker has joined the ranks of Spanish animation companies trying to go international, Jose-Maria Villagrassa and Jorge Wolodarsky report.

IN Spain there are very few children's programmes with an international projection. Apart from BRB (*D'Artacan, La vuelta al mundo de Willy Fogg, David el Gnomo, La Llamada de los gnomos*), the independent venture of Romagosa (*Don Quixote*) and the series produced by Jordi Amoros and Equip (*El Ultimo Koala*) there are few independent producers willing to invest in the still uncertain Spanish market, and still fewer when the audience is limited to the young ones. But there is another name joining the above mentioned, Antoni D'Ocon, who has recently produced and released through TVE an original animated puppet production *Los Aurones* (26 half hour episodes).

"The great majority of the puppets are robot-like," says D'Ocon, "their movements are like the human movements, the eyes, the neck, they bend down, get up, etc. There are also manual movements but others are with aid of controls. The theatre company from the Institut del Teatre de Barcelona handles them. Sometimes electronic controls do not help to convey tender feelings for example, or delicate movements, and that manual handling has been necessary. There are very few post-production tricks. Almost everything was done at the shooting stage." The original sound track of the series is in English, at Video London studios, and the distribution company RPTA has included the series in its catalogue.

According to D'Ocon it is a very unusual production. It tells of life in a remote island home of the "aurones", who received this name because they make their tools from gold.

The original idea and script are from Josep Viciana, a close collaborator of D'Ocon in *El màgic del màgic Bruffi*, a series with puppets produced in 1984 co-produced with TV-3. While shooting those programmes over three years, they experimented with animation techniques that were finally used with *The Aurones*.

The first step in order to promote the series was to produce a pilot programme with a cost of approximately 20 million pesetas (around US$200,000) paid in full by the production company. "I follow more or less the lines established by foreign producers. First, there is a pilot programme where I show we can make it. After that I try to convince somebody to come into the project. The pilot won't be broadcast because the series improved on it." After RTVE saw the pilot it became interested in the project and invested 15 per cent of the total budget of 376 million pesetas (almost US$3.5 million).

"We believe in the theory that the parents will be glued to the sets together with their children. The children will start to ask questions, not because they won't understand it just because the adventures are tales. Research commissioned before the launch brought up things such as how the children will not only explain what he or she saw but his or her interpretation of things, relating the different episodes. We wanted to avoid a continuity in the storyline so if the kids miss an episode they can still follow the programme." ■

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Back to the future

Although cartoons are kids stuff in the US today, they were popular prime time programming almost 30 years ago. Now at least one network may bring back the fine art of animation and the future looks brighter for the depressed animation industry. By Arnold J Friedman

BACK IN the '60s, Hanna-Barbera had four animated series on the ABC Television Network, in prime time. And in the early '70s they produced a fifth for first-run syndication, also shown to night-time audiences. All five series eventually found their syndicated way to children's prime time, on Saturday morning, and today they are still being shown in tot-times during the week with a gratifying share of older audiences, mostly mothers.

Now Hanna-Barbera wants to go back to the future and it's no secret that Joe Barbera is on a personal quest to bring *The Flintstones* to CBS or another network to start an animation renaissance in a prime time.

Although there is no official word on the status of this project, three other deals are in development with networks and at press time a fourth is awaiting a go, according to Sam Ewing, Vice-President of Development for Hanna-Barbera's Hollywood-based production company.

Because the profitable trend to prime time animation was pioneered by Bill Hanna and Joe Barbera, they naturally want to be the ones to bring it back. But they may run second to Margaret Loesch, President and CED of marvel Productions, who told *TV World* she has a development deal with DBS for a comedy-adventure animated series.

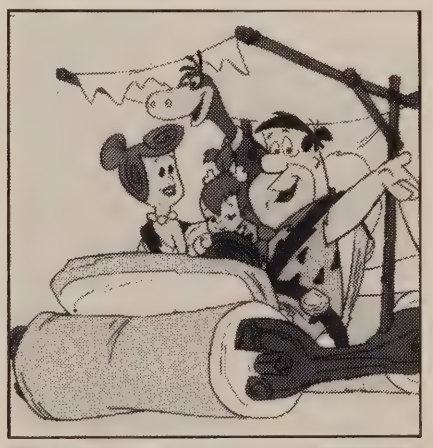
"Outside the US it's an extremely popular art and entertainment form," she told *TV World*. "Almost any night, in prime time, you can see an animated series in France, Italy, England, Japan . . . It's topical and political and sometimes a little blue, but in the US somebody slapped a 'for children only' tag on it and we've gone along. Except," she noted, "for the advertising community, which produces some of its most effective commercial spots with animation."

Jules Bass, at Rankin-Bass, told us he is developing a night-time animated half hour. Joe Ruby at Ruby Spears said he was not. And Ton Ruzicka, director of production for Walt Disney, also said the TV animation division of his company is not developing a prime time programme for television. According to a source at NBC, a new anthology series commitment with Disney includes updated live-action programmes based on the successful *Davy Crockett* series and *The Absent Minded Professor*. They would play on a rotating schedule with Disney specials which, she said, might also include classic animated feature films such as *Dumbo*.

Last year Marvel made a special for CBS based on the successful live action *Blondie* movies. It did not spin off to a series as hoped, although it did well enough.

"Whenever specials like *Garfield* or *Cathy* air there is a large audience of adults and children," Loesch said. We know there is an adult audience waiting for us."

She hopes what that audience is waiting for is the series in development with CBS. The working title is *The Band* and it is a comedy/adventure about a group of musicians who travel the world. It was created by Stan Lee who has been with Marvel from the start of its comic book empire. Lee Mendelson, best known for producing the *Charlie Brown* specials, is a partner in the venture.



The Flintstones: about to be re-born? Jetsons: numer one. Duck Tales: adult audiences

High adventure

Marvel's Epic line of comic books, said Loesch, pulls 18-25 demographics and is ideal for animated series. "The Marvel style is high adventure: graphic novels with heart and soul. Very heavily story-oriented; very moralistic and melodramatic." She and Stan Lee are pitching television versions of these established series – and finding that network executives are mostly unaware of their adult audience. "It's just a matter of time," she said. "We'll wear then down."

But resistance from network execs, it is generally agreed, stems not so much from a lack of faith in an adult audience for animation as from lack of a viable concept.

"My instincts are that it will have to be totally original," Jules Bass told us. "I'm not sure you can take a comic book character."

Bass has two other projects that may or may not be for the networks but which he thinks will work in family time. "Every animation studio always has a few things bubbling away in that pot," he said.

continued on page 34►

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Back to the future

► continued from p32

According to Disney's Rizicka, nobody has come up with the right formula yet for a revival of prime time animation. "The problem *we* have with formula is that it would have to have enough adult humour to bring in a broad audience and still be Disney enough to put Disney's name on it."

Although Disney's live-action movies have broken the Goodie-two-Shoes mould of the original production philosophy, its animation is still typically puritanical.

Prime time

It is having extremely good luck with its duck. *Duck Tales,* airing mostly on late afternoons around 16.30, inherits an adult audience of soap opera fans and is hammocked between these soaps and the early news. Ratings so far report a 30 per cent audience of 18 and over, Ruzicke said, qualifying *Duck Tales* as a crossover programme for them.

Joe Ruby said Ruby-Spears' Christmas special, *A Mouse, A Mystery and Me,* featured an animated mouse in a live-action series. Although it was aired in prime time, the perception was that it was for children, he said, and he expects that if it evolves into a series it will be for Saturday mornings.

About three or four years ago, he recalls, Ruby-Spears was going to produce a prime time animated series for a consortium of station groups, but it didn't fly because they couldn't agree among themselves that it would.

Hanna-Barbera's Same Ewing agrees that with the right concept and show, prime-time animation will work. "It's like the sculptor with a block of granite. The show is in there somewhere; he just has to keep chipping away at it."

Presentations for the three properties he has in development for networks, he said, will be made on paper with art, storylines and character development. "It it's necessary to do a little bit more maybe we'll make a pencil tests or ten seconds of animation to show how a character moves." Pilots are not expected. Networks know what animation is, he says.

Ewing pitches animation to the networks as something different because he says in the current environment that is what animation is. And it is what networks need for counter-programming.

"The idea is to find out who is not being served by the shows that are very successful on the other networks and offer them something different.

Sometimes just a change of format can make the difference. According to Andy Samet at Worldvision Enterprises, Operation Prime Time distributed a limited series of animated half hours a few years ago that starred Yogi Bear. Later it was edited into a two hour movie for Worldvision called *Yogi's First Christmas,* and did so much better in this format that Worldvision ordered up 10 more movies from Hanna-Barbera (both companies are subsidiaries of The Great American Broadcasting Group) and is now syndicating them under the umbrella title *Hanna-Barbera's Superstars 10.*

In December *The Jetsons Meet the Flintstones* was aired in 75 per cent of the country, Samet said, with about 16 per cent of that coverage in prime time. It was the number one animated programme in the month measured, according to Neilsen Station Index, Samet said.

During March and April the fourth of the 10 movies is being aired. *Top Cat and the Beverly Hills Cats* is another reprise of earlier Hanna-Barbera hit series.

Asked about an end run around the networks, Margaret Loesch said producing animation for first run syndication is "a strong possiblity" but there is an inherent problem.

"First-run night-time is generally made up of lower-cost programming, such as game shows, and that's our competition. Animation is not inexpensive so that while I think it's possible, we'd have to find the right programme and get the right financial support to make it happen. But the audience is there."

She thinks the networks are animation's best bet for prime time. "The assessment made by Sam (Ewing) is correct," she said. "The nets are waiting for the right formula. If the right idea comes along and they believe in it they'll go for it."

Audience loyalty

As an example she cited the animated programme Steven Spielberg produced last season called *The Family Dog.* It was part of his *Amazing Stories* series for NBC and the network ordered a limited series (maybe six) for a trial. The annimation industry is anxious to see what kind of audience loyalty it will generate.

In the mean time, lots of animation for the adults among us continues to be distributed by Coe Films which has about 3,500 animated films culled from festivals, markets and independent filmmakers in the US and abroad. About half of that is adult, said Mignon Levey, director of sales for Coe films, adding that there are usually adult references in most of the shorts. They are used to round out half-hour and hour programme slots – and by cable systems including HBO, Showtime and Bravo. PBS is another good market for their animated product, she says, "Since much of it was made for grown-ups in the first place. Arts & Entertainment and USA Network do not use animation," Levey told us.

Perhaps television will trade-off its audiences. If past becomes future for US television, adult viewers may once again find they are watching cartoons while their children switch to live action. ■

TOP ANIMATION PROGRAMMES AROUND EUROPE

Country	Channel	Programme	Distributor
Norway	NRK	Postman Pat	BBC Enterprises
Belgium	BRT	The Snorks	Sepp
	RBTF	The Smurfs	Sepp
Europe	Childrens Channel	My Little Pony and Friends	Sunbow International
Sweden	SVT	Disneytime	Buena Vista TV
Denmark	DR	Wind in the Willows	Thames TV
Netherlands	EO	Nathalie, little girl on the farm	Telecable Benelux
United Kingdom	BBC	Around the world with Willy Fog	BRB Spain

Film business boom

Jean Louis Erneux reports on the unusual increased activity in Belgian animation

OSTEND born Raoul Servais is generally recognised as Belgium's best animation filmer. *Harpya*, a nine-minute animation film about a harpy (a predatory woman) with a bald head and an insatiable appetite, won the Prize for Best Short at the Cannes Film Festival in 1979. Ever since then, Servais has been working on a feature-length film for which he has patented a system for welding live black footage to painted sets. But raising the money wasn't easy as well as their notoriously high production costs, animation films are rarely hits at the box office.

The Snorks: TV series made in the US

However, Servais's *Taxandria* will finally become a reality. A BF200 million (US$5.7 million) coproduction scheme has been set up with Belgian, German and French partners. The production is due to start in July and people will work on it for two years. Without the support from the Belgian public authorities, *Taxandria* would probably never have had the chance to be born. Through their respective film selection commissions, the Flemish community granted Servais a BF50 million (US$1.4 million) budget whereas the French-speaking community decided to pay BF72 million (US$2 million) in three-years time for the film.

"Without any public backing," explains Christiane Dano from the Direction generale de l'audiovisuel de la communaute française, "this kind of feature film would just be impossible to produce. Approximately one third of the BF120 million (US$3.43 million) annual budget from the French-speaking selection commission goes to animated products, shorts, series or feature films. But there is a trend for TV productions whereas the professional associations urge to give priority to theatrical productions. But new associations could appear in the future . . ."

Another animated feature film, *Jeune homme 52 ans desire pendre le large*, seventy-minutes long, will be coproduced this year in Belgium by Graphoui and RTBF. And there is also *Marquis* (Sade's dog) that will be produced by the Belgian company Alligator Films (the company behind *Téléchat*) and the French outfit Constellation.

But this frantic activity is rather unusual. Gerald Frydman's projected feature film adaptation of Dante's *Divine Comedy* using real actors with animation only for the scenery, special effects and monsters, was welcomed but never financially supported. And during these last three years, the only animation feature film produced was Picha's *Big Bang*, "a hot film about the cold war", a sort of bawdy animated version of Spielberg's *Close Encounters of the Third Kind*. The high production costs and too low revenues from the box office didn't cover the BF155 million (US$4.43 million) total budget.

It doesn't come as a surprise, thereafter, that a Belgian company such as SEPP makes its TV series (*The Smurfs, Snorks, Foofur, Bibifoc*) abroad, mainly in the United States, considering that the adequate structures are insufficient in Belgium and in order to gain easier access to the American networks. ■

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"Asterix and

The battle is on to push a popular European animation character into the US market. Bill Peterson reports on the strategies that are being employed.

IN EUROPE, he's a big star, almost a household word. Almost 30 books about him have appeared in more than 20 languages and sold more than 180 million copies worldwide. On screen, his five feature films have grossed more than $37 million. Still, he has never conquered the US and remains a virtual unknown in the world's biggest market.

We're talking about the tough little Gaul, Asterix. Along with his sidekick Obelix, his faithful canine companion Dogamatix and a whole crew of zany Gauls including Vitalstatistix, Getafix, Impedimenta and Majestix, he outfoxes the Romans, the arch-enemies, in twisted plots which have more to do with contemporary values than with the resistance of the Gallic tribes against the Roman Empire in what is now northern France.

Now a powerful West German company has taken over the world sales of Asterix with the intention of making it as big a business in the US as in Europe. Juergen Wohlrabe's Extrafilm is now co-producing Asterix with France's Gaumont at a jointly-owned studio in Paris. Wohlrabe already has a long experience with Asterix, since his distribution company Jugendfilm has been responsible for making Asterix the success he is in West Germany.

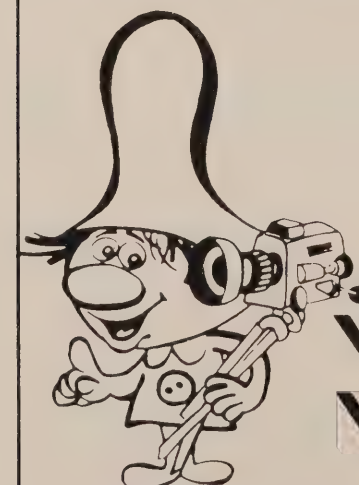
"Here in Europe, Asterix is a major product," Wohlrabe told *TV World*. "Up to now, the US is a desert. Asterix makes more money here than the Disney films. Why shouldn't it do well in the US too?"

The theatrical box-office in West Germany is so good, TV sales have been ruled out. At least one Asterix film is always in re-release. As this was written, there were actually four Asterix films playing in West Berlin, for example. For US sales, Extrafilm plans to market a package of theatrical, television and video, not to mention product merchandising.

Wohlrabe's first task is to prepare American versions. British English versions of the Asterix films are old hat, but British humour and accents are not as marketable in the US as a real apple-pie Americanised product, Wohlrabe said an American version of Asterix III, *The Twelve Tasks of Asterix*, is now being prepared as "training." The current work-in-progress, working titles *Asterix and the Big Fight*, is scheduled as a movie for the American market, while still keeping the faithful European audience in mind. "It will premiere in New York, not Paris or Berlin," said Wohlrabe.

After American versions are available, Wohlrabe plans to bring in a major US distributor. "We have interest from three major companies," he said. Although British editions of the Asterix comic books have penetrated the East Coast market in the US, Asterix as a

LOOK FOR HUNGARIAN TELEVISION PROGRAMMES



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Fables	Cartoon	13 × 7 min.
Tales of Vases	Paper-cut-cartoon	13 × 12—15 min.
Zeno	Plasticine	22 × 2—4 min.
Encyclopaedia	Cartoon	13 × 5 min.
Gardrobe Tales	Puppet-animation for adults	13 × 7 min.
Centaur Junior	Cartoon	13 × 5,5 min.
The Great Angler II.	Cartoon	13 × 8 min.
Hungarian Historical Legends	Cartoon	13 × 10 min.
Löhnrot's tales	Cartoon	6 × 12 min.

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Design: G. Halasy

he big fight"

character remains unknown nationally. Plans are afoot to make sure American editions of the comic books reach the US mass market in time for the release of the movies. The merchandising campaign and tie-ins with sponsors will also form a part of the plan of attack. Coca-Cola and McDonalds are currently involved with Asterix in Europe, but it's still open whether this tie-in will carry over into the US.

At the root of the marketing strategy is an undeniably top quality product. The current Asterix film has a budget of about $7 million. Under the leadership of Asterix veteran executive producer Yannik Piel, about 150 people are now at work in the dedicated studio, a bright former factory in Paris. Among the 75 animators, according to Rolf Giesen who is handling promotion for Extrafilm, are some of the world's top young artists. Their product is the highest quality three-dimensional animation to rival the golden days of Disney.

To achieve this and create characters with "soul," each member of the Asterix mob is drawn by a different artist instead of an animator handling an entire sequence as is common in Europe.

Transformed

Computer animation and such techiques as video rotoscoping have no place here. "This is all conventional animation," said Giesen. "We're not aiming for a technical award." He feels each of the films has shown a substantial improvement since the first was made in 1967. "The first one, *Asterix the Gaul*, was really a TV idea transformed for the cinema," he said.

Extrafilm is sure the work-in-progress is a winner. "There's music, a lot of action, and the soothsayer Getafix is a really great, sort of Bela Lugosi character," said Giesen. Composer is L A based Michel Columbier (*The Golden Shield*).

Although cracking the US is a top priority, the rest of the world is not being neglected. Asterix is already a success in Europe's major territories including West Germany, of course, and France, Italy, Spain and the UK. Extrafilm is even looking for sales to Eastern Europe. "We're focussing on the cinema, but television and video sales are just as important," said Giesen.

Extrafilm is trying to build up a world marketing structure to last well into the future. Plans call for the release of a Asterix feature every second year until 2000. Since 1992 will be the 500th anniversary of the voyage of Columbus, Asterix VII will literally bridge the Atlantic. Working title: *The Great Crossing*.

Asterix was born in 1959, the child of French illustrator Albert Underzo and writer René Goscinny. Underzo has continued producing the books alone since Goscinny's death in 1977. He has also maintained the artistic direction of the films. While the movies are loosely based on the comic books, they feature a substantial amount of new material. The current film uses elements from two books and about twenty per cent original material. ■

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▶ continued from p28

freedom of information etc.

"Our business plan envisages reaching break-even point in our third year of operation. For the Benelux about 80 percent of foreign programmes are being dubbed, with sub-titles for the remaining 20 per cent. Almost 65 per cent will be animated programming, with 35 per cent live action and almost 30 per cent of programme content will be original Dutch or Belgian material," says Hesselink.

An independent survey done a few weeks before Kindernet went on the air showed that 80 per cent of all Dutch households connected to cable networks were enthusiastic about the concept and 70 per cent of the households canvassed would be willing to pay the monthly charge of 40 cents. The ball is now very firmly in the court of the local cable operators, and although Kindernet has started off fairly modestly, Dennis Livson and his team have already shown their ability to pick their way through the minefield of broadcasting politics in the Netherlands. The backing of Fuji-8 and W H Smith is confirmation enough that Kindernet has done its homework properly. ■

The Kindernet team from left to right: Eva Spanjer, Gemma Bakker, Henk Krop, Rene Bickel, Theresa le Nuyl-Brans, Ard Hesselink, Eddy Loen, Martin Cohen

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Sales Assistant

Dubbing all over the world

Diana Hill reports on a Los Angeles based dubbing business where quality may equal cost but the international results could prove worthwhile

IN A small dubbing studio, tucked off Sunset Boulevard, Hollywood, George Bour, the remix engineer is creating the computer voice patterns for the Spanish version of *Max Headroom*. It takes him 24 hours to deftly produce the Spanish 'stacatto' dub for a one hour episode. It's important to get it right – high quality production could mean success for Max in the largely untapped Hispanic market and provide further proof that quality dubbing can release another product into multi language markets.

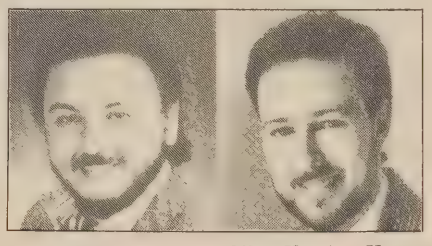
Intersound, the company responsible for this Spanish version of Headroom, was launched eight years ago by Frank and Olfet Agrama. Their son, Ahmed, now runs the business which is a subsidiary division of the parent company Harmony Gold. Originally only involved in Arabic dubbing, the company has now stretched its linguistic talents to cover English, Spanish, Italian, German, French, Portuguese and Japanese, providing a dubbing service for television, film, homevideo and airline duplication.

"A great deal of dubbing – especially Italian and Spanish has had the reputation for being inferior" says Kent Harrison Hayes, Executive VP for Intersound, "all Spanish dubbing traditionally came out of Mexico – they had no reason to raise the levels of quality, here we are trying to raise the levels in all languages that we dub."

The dubbing process is complicated and initially, lengthy (see section for details). From minor lip-sync detail through to major basics such as knowing that only neutral Spanish is willingly accepted in all Latin American countries, good dubbing requires experience, patience and a good pool of personnel from which to draw technical and acting expertise. The company has 38 technical and management staff but its total payroll in any one week will be topping 180 people – actors, writers and directors are used either from a steady pool or are flown in from the relevant country if necessary.

Editing is also required. Restrictions and regulations in Arabic countries mean that certain situations have to be cut, or even added to, as with some children's cartoons. Says Hayes: "All of the cartoon series that we've done over the last few years in Arabic have had something that's not acceptable. For example, in the TV series *The Maple Town Story* animal families are featured. Whole sections of the pig family had to be edited out. Anything that involves magic has to be turned into dream sequences and anything remotely suggestive is of course toned right down." Conversely, Japan has few, often no restrictions – almost anything goes. Dubbing changes necessary for the Latin American market tend to be for vulgarity/bad language.

Hayes is quick to point out the advantages for producers and distributors working with Intersound: "Due to a number of factors, they (the studios) want to dub here and now, an important reason being lack of piracy. Someone can get hold of a copy tape in LA, then say take it to Venezeula. They dub it there and distribute it through the country and then they bring it back to sell the illegally dubbed version throughout the US. They can do it so fast, they are collecting the revenues, and studio ends up selling nothing – the market has been flooded with pirated copies. So we find studios are dubbing their product now, even if they don't want it done at this very moment, they go ahead for future investment's sake." There are also transport advantages – there can be no stalling on a given deadline when the producers probably live or work a few miles away, and no customs difficulties.



Ahmed Agrama (left) and Kent Harrison Hayes

The company has recently moved into subtitling and is pleased with its recent success in airline duplication – and the synergy that has been created. "The companies we work for in all media now have to make just one set of elements. We can do all their dubbing, subtitling, all submasters or protection copies that they would need, all from the same facility house," says Hayes.

In the fall of 1989 Intersound will be moving up Sunset to the historic Preview House. Five thousand square metres will be available – an expansive leap from the current 1,000 square metres. Expansive projects are also emerging – the most recent being the

continued on p40►

Max Headroom: It takes 24 hours to produce a one hour Spanish version

Dubbing all over the world

► continued from p39

exciting TV/radio link-up for the CBS network with *Trial and Error*. Seven major markets across the US carried a simultaneous Hispanic radio broadcast with the TV programme. Says Ahmed Agrama, President of Intersound, "there are television sets that can pick up dual languages but as none of the three networks have stereo this is the only form of technology that will work." Embassy/Columbia TV who came up with the idea was no doubt influenced by the huge success of the day and date broadcasts of such films as *Staying Alive* and most recently *La Bamba*. There are an estimated 20 million Hispanics currently in the US and percentage estimates for 1995 in the southern Californian area are as much as 80 per cent so the market is clearly substantial. When asked whether Intersound would consider moving across the border to shave off some of the Mexican TV dubbing business – in particular the telenovela – Hayes said "We will do anything, whatever the market demands. We've been pushing for all these years and people now finally understand why we charge more – you pay for quality – but still, it would have to be a natural development rather than a forced circumstance."

Further development seems likely – talks are underway with the Chinese and depending on the success of *Trial and Error* more simultaneous broadcasts will be planned. In the meantime, as George Bours feeds the computerised O,O,O, Ole's into the Spanish *Max Headroom* he no doubt ponders, in fear and awe, on the likelihood of a Japanese version and comments "It would be difficult, each sentence would be very long but we'd work something out." ■

George Bours

Dubbing – the process

Company to supply an English continuity script and an international M and E track (music and effects).

Transfer is done onto ¾" cassettes, VHS's and Beta's.

Tapes are sent out to writers – if story doesn't quite 'gel', eg humour doesn't translate from one language to another – changes made. Very important to keep it in line with M and E track.

Casting of shows from pool of actors.

Into recording.

A half hour Spanish recording usually takes 1½-2 days.

Show is then remixed, adding any special effects.

Audio effects also added, mixed with M and E and then relayed back to the source tape or new master is made.

One half-hour of a TV series can be delivered in a month – total time from start to finish, but once initial episode is completed, more of the same series can be delivered very quickly – up to three a week.

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International Ratings

UNITED KINGDOM — TV

Week ending March 6, 1988

Rank	Programme	Channel	Rating (millions)
1	Eastenders (Tue/Sun)	BBC1	23.90
2	Eastenders (Thu/Sun)	BBC1	23.80
3	Coronation Street (Mon)	ITV	16.65
4	Coronation Street (Weds)	ITV	16.00
5	Neighbours (Fri*)	BBC1	15.45
6	Neighbours (Tues*)	BBC1	15.05
7	Neighbours (Wed*)	BBC1	14.95
8	Neighbours (Mon*)	BBC1	14.80
9	Neighbours (Thu*)	BBC1	14.60
10	That's Life	BBC1	13.30
11	Holiday '88	BBC1	13.70
12	Wish You Were Here (Mon/Wed)	ITV	13.55
13	A Question of Sport	BBC1	13.40
14	Wish Me Luck	ITV	13.15
15	Catchphrase	ITV	12.55

** Indicates two shows daily*

CANADA — TV

Week ending February 14, 1988

Rank	Programme	Channel	Rating (thousands)
1	The Cosby Show	CTV	3,965
2	Olympic Ski Jump/ Hockey	CTV	3,732
3	Olympic Opening Ceremonies	CTV	3,612
4	Olympic Various	CTV	3,507
5	Elvis and Me Pt2	CTV	3,132
6	Dallas	CBC	2,563
7	Disney Sunday Movie	CBC	2,508
8	Lance et Compte 2	Radio-Canada	2,495
9	NHL All-Star	CBC	2,281
10	Newhart	CBC	2,022
11	Hockey Night in Canada	CBC	1,930
12	Dames de Coeur	Radio-Canada	1,751
13	Entre Chien et Loup	TVA	1,559
14	Dynasty	TVA	1,555
15	Chop Suey	TVA	1,509

Source: AC Nielsen

UNITED KINGDOM: HOME VIDEO

Week ending February, 1988

Rank	Programme	Supplier
1	Crocodile Dundee	CBS/Fox
2	Platoon	RCA/Columbia
3	Golden Child	CIC
4	Lethal Weapon	Warner
5	Top Gun	CIC
6	The Voyage Home	CIC
7	The Short Circuit	CBS/Fox
8	The Name of the Rose	CBS/Fox
9	Police Academy 4	Warner
10	Heartbreak Ridge	Warner
11	The Morning After	Guild
12	Peggy Sue got Married	CBC/Fox
13	The Fourth Protocal	Rank
14	Raw Deal	CBS/Fox
15	Mosquito Coast	CBS/Fox

Source: Video at Home

GERMANY — TV

Week ending February 28, 1988

Rank	Programme	Channel	Rating
1	Wetten, Dass . . .?	ZDF	53
2	Die Schwarzwaldklinik	ZDF	50
3	Gustav Adolfs Page	ARD	40
4	Heute	ZDF	39
5	Heute	ZDF	35
6	XV Olympische Winterspiele	ARD	33
6	Die Sportschan	ARD	33
6	Heute	ZDF	33
6	Sport am Samstag	ZDF	33
10	Lindenstrasse	ARD	32

HONG KONG — TV

Week ending February 28, 1988

Rank	Programme	Channel	Rating (thousands)
1	City Japes	TVBJ	2,120
2	The New Matchmaker	TVBJ	2,087
3	Withered in the Wind	TVBJ	2,072
4	The New Matchmaker	TVBJ	2,068
5	The New Matchmaker	TVBJ	2,059
6	Echoes of the Heart	TVBJ	2,058
7	City Japes	TVBJ	2,056
8	City Japes	TVBJ	2,039
9	The New Matchmaker	TVBJ	2,033
10	Withered in the Wind	TVBJ	2,024

Source: AGB McNair

PHILIPPINES — TV

Week ending January 31, 1988

Rank	Programme	Channel	Rating
1	Daimos	2	15.8
2	Twilight Zone	2	15.7
3	All Star Wrestling	13	14.3
4	Great Disney Spectacular	2	13.6
5	McGyver	9	12.2
6	Bioman	2	12.0
6	The Equaliser	7	12.0
7	Hooperman	7	11.4
8	Tales of the Darkside	9	11.3
9	Music, Music	13	10.8
10	Spectacular Action on Screen	13	10.8
10	Miami Vice	7	10.8
11	Knight Rider	7	10.7
12	Outlaws	7	10.6
13	Werewolf	7	10.4

Source: Pulsitron TV Ratings Service AGB-Media Pulse, Inc

NEW ZEALAND — TV

Week ending February 28, 1988

Rank	Programme	Channel	Rating
1	Calgary 88	1	30
2	Calgary 88	1	29
3	Calgary 88	1	27
3	Calgary 88	1	27
5	Coronation Street	1	25
5	Calgary 88	1	25
7	Coronation Street	1	24
8	Calgary 88	1	23
9	World Alive — Spain	1	21
10	Sons and Daughters	2	20
10	Sons and Daughters	2	20
12	Sons and Daughters	2	19
12	Body Language	2	19
12	Never the Twain	1	19
12	Footloose	2	19
12	Late Late Breakfast Show	1	19
17	Calgary 88	1	18

Source: AGB Research Group

GERMANY: HOME VIDEO

Week ending 19 February, 1988

Rank	Programme	Supplier
1	Platoon	RCA/Columbia
2	Otto 2 – Der neue film	marketing film
3	Heartbreak Ridge	Warner
4	Das Geheimnis meines Erfolges	CIC
5	Auf der Suche nach dem Goldenen kind	CIC
6	American Fighter 2	Cannon/VMP
7	Aliens – Die Rückkehr	CBS/Fox
8	Police Academy 4	Warner
9	Mannequin	Cannon/VMP
10	Gottes Vergessene kinder	CIC
11	Jumpin' Jack Flash	CBS/Fox
12	Soulman	Highlight
13	Crocodile Dundee	CBS/Fox
14	Top Gun	CIC
15	Over The Top	Cannon/VMP

FRANCE — TV

Rank	Programme	Channel	Rating
1	La Guerre des Polices	A2	29
2	Sacree Soiree	TF1	28
2	Sebastien, c'est fou	TF1	28
4	La roue de la fortune	TF1	27
4	La roue de la fortune	TF1	27
6	La roue de la	TF1	26
7	McGyver	A2	25
8	'Hommage a Claude Francois	A2	25
9	L'Ecole des Fans	A2	22
9	le Seuit (film)	A2	22
11	la Bataille de San Sebastian	FR3	19
12	La mouche noire	FR3	18
13	Benny Hill	FR3	15
13	Tarzan in New York	FR3	15
15	Special J.O.	FR3	14

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INTERNATIONAL EVENTS

April 5-10	**Frankfurt, Germany**, *Music and the Silent Film. (Tel: 069 13 40337)*
April 8-10	**Edinburgh, UK**, *International Conference on 'Television and the Small Country' (Tel: Edinburgh 558 3275)*
April 15-19	**Zaragoza, Spain**, *Munditele (Tel: 313211)*
April 28-May 3	**Cannes, France**, *MIP-TV. (Tel: 33-14505 1403)*
May 9-14	**Cardiff, UK**, *Media '88. (Tel: Cardiff 399791)*
May 11-18	**Switzerland**, *Golden Rose of Montreux Festival of Light Entertainment. (Tlx: 453222)*
May 29-June 3	**Oslo, Norway**, *Nordic Screening. (Tel: 47-2-45-90 50) ext 8706; Tlx: 71794)*
June 1-9	**Munich, Germany**, *13th Prix Jeunesse International.*
June 9	**London, UK**, *Independent Film and TV Production: Conference on access under the new terms of trade and raising finance. (Tel: London 236 4080)*
June 5-11	**Alberta, Canada**, *BANFF Television Festival. (Tel: 762 3060; Tlx: 03-822804; Fax: 403 762 6444)*
June 9-16	**Prague, Czechoslovakia**, *25th Czechoslovak International TV Festival*
September 6-9	**Sydney, Australia**, *4th Pacific International Media Market (PIMM).*
September 23-30	**Las Vegas, Nevada, US**, *Cinetex Convention for Film, TV and Video.*
October 5-11	**Bristol, UK**, *Wildscreen International. (Festival Director: 272 292656)*
October 17-23	**Plovdiv, Bulgaria**, *16th Edition of The Golden Chest International TV Festival.*
November 7-13	*London Screenings. (Tel: London 228 7459)*
November 14-18	**Blagoevgrad, Bulgaria**. *The Golden Antenna. First International Festival of Entertainment television programmes.*

While every effort is made to ensure accuracy, TV World cannot be held responsible for errors in this information.

Animated education

► **continued from p29**

cast", Ihara explains. Now showing is *Lion and Lily*, adapted from the stories of Alexander Dumas, and a joint production with South Korea's KBS. "A delightful alternative to robots and rockets!", cries the English-language PR release. According to Ihara, the co-production utilizes the splendid talents of Korean animators and opens up the Korean television market which he says has more cartoons than even Japan. NHK aims at children up to 12, different from the commercials who set their sights on the 10–17 range.

The different target audience highlights one of the difficulties for the Japanese animation industry. Because comic-book reading is a hobby that Japanese carry well into their twenties (and beyond), cartoons are made with 18 year-olds in mind. It also explains why *meisaku* still manage to rate well enough to survive: the Japanese parent, more than his western counterpart, is never too old to watch a cartoon.

Toei Animation, a subsidiary of the giant Toei theatre group, is the oldest animation company on the block. Formed in 1956, its full-time staff of 166 (and 110 animators on contract) churned out last year alone 294 domestic television series and 114 series for overseas customers, mainly the US.

According to Yukio Hayashi, chief of its International Department, the rapid rise in labour costs over the past five years has made Toei think seriously about introducing computer animation. "Another problem is the rapidly changing viewers' tastes," he says, adding that "we have to cater for a wider range of viewing tastes. The Japanese cartoon viewing public is anyone between the age of three and twenty."

Turning to recent trends, Hayashi said Toei had not made a robot cartoon in five years. "The so-called gag action, combining madcap comedy and fairly tame action scenes, has really taken off." A good example is *Topsy-Turvy High School*, the story of "five mischievous boys whose antics and pranks are a continual source of disruption in the classroom." Another is *Dragon Ball*, Fuji TV's 20%-rating gag action", now doing big business in France. Hayashi says that super-hero and animal-hero series are also more popular these days. The latter, he predicts will become a world-wide trend in two or three years' time. "On the other hand," he predicts, "robots, very popular in the US through to the end of '87, will begin to fade."

Toho International's Hiranuma would not agree. Toho's April-premiering *Borgman* series has a robot-hero that can be bought as a toy robot. Little Taro puts the toy in front of his television while the cartoon is shown. He watches in amazement as certain sounds embedded in the soundtrack make his toy robot move. Wow! ■

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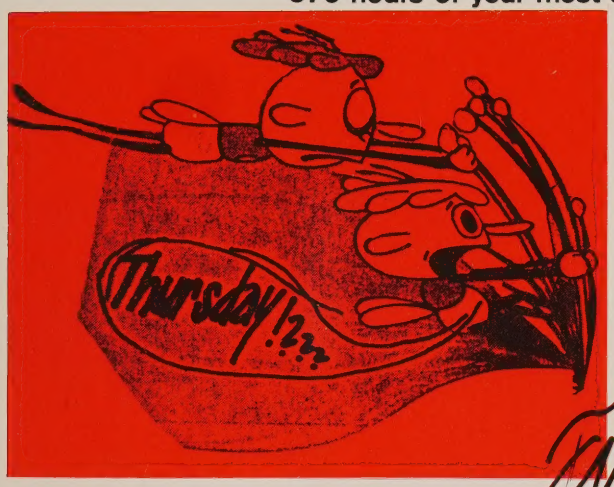
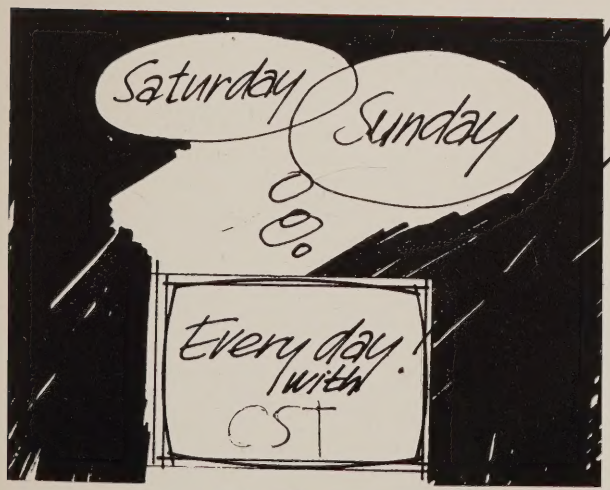
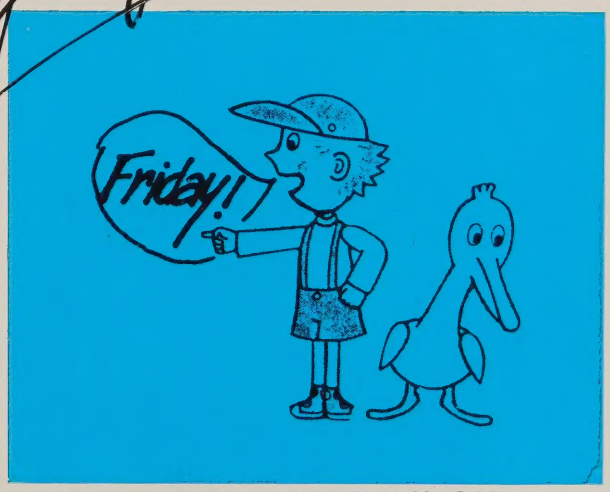


Fun day by day





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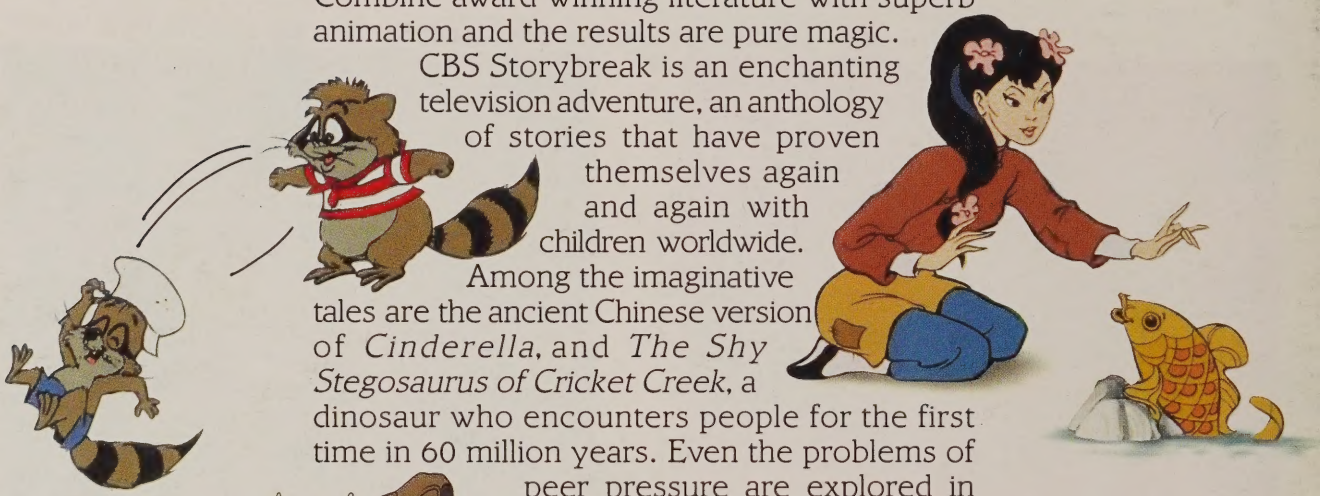

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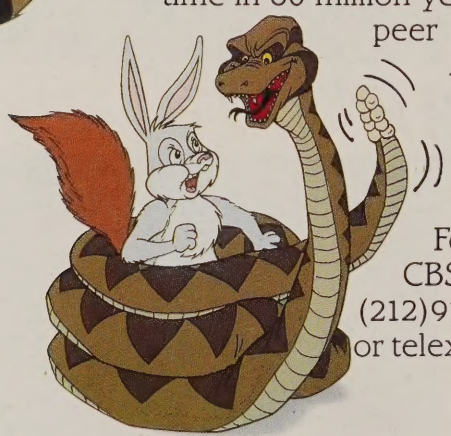

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